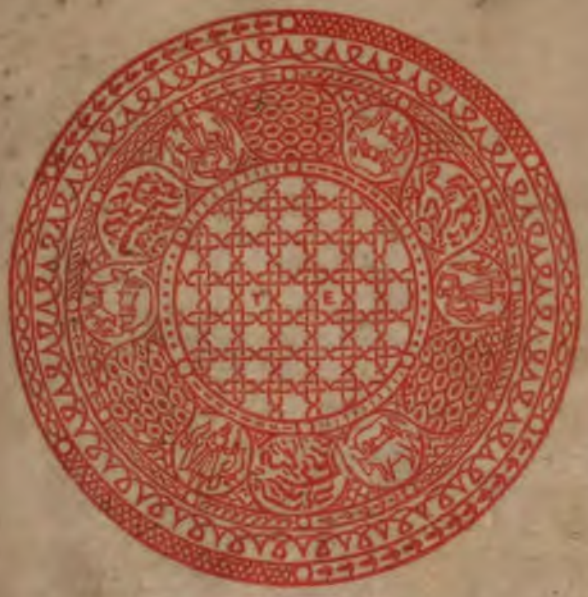
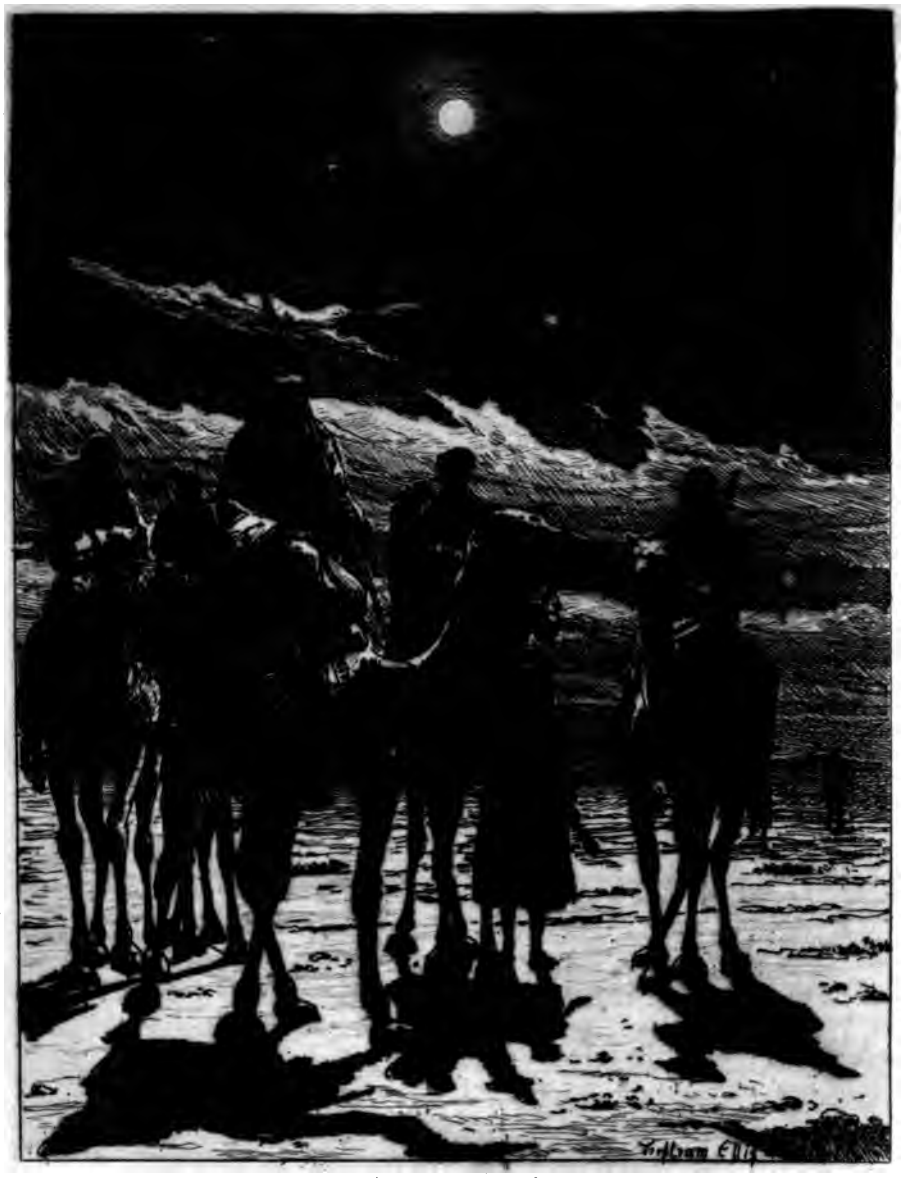
On a Raft, & Through the Desert.

Vol. II.



Through The Desert.



Night Watch in the Desert.

ON A RAFT,

AND

THROUGH THE DESERT:

BY

TRISTRAM J. ELLIS

THE NARRATIVE OF AN ARTIST'S JOURNEY THROUGH NORTHERN SYRIA AND KURDISTAN, BY THE TIGRIS TO MOSUL AND BAGHDAD, AND OF A RETURN JOURNEY ACROSS THE DESERT BY THE EUPHRATES AND PALMYRA TO DAMASCUS, OVER THE ANTI-LEBANON TO BAALBEK AND TO BEYROUT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

ILLUSTRATED BY

Thirty-Eight Etchings on Copper by the Author.

WITH A MAP.

VOL. II.

Through The Desert.

LONDON: MDCCCLXXXI.
FIELD & TUER, YE LEADENHALLE PRESSE, E.C., &
HAMILTON, ADAMS & CO., 32, PATERNOSTER ROW.
NEW YORK: SCRIBNER & WELFORD, 743 & 745, BROADWAY.

FIELD & TUER,
Ye LEADENHALLE PRESSE, E.C.
[T2,926]

VOL. II.

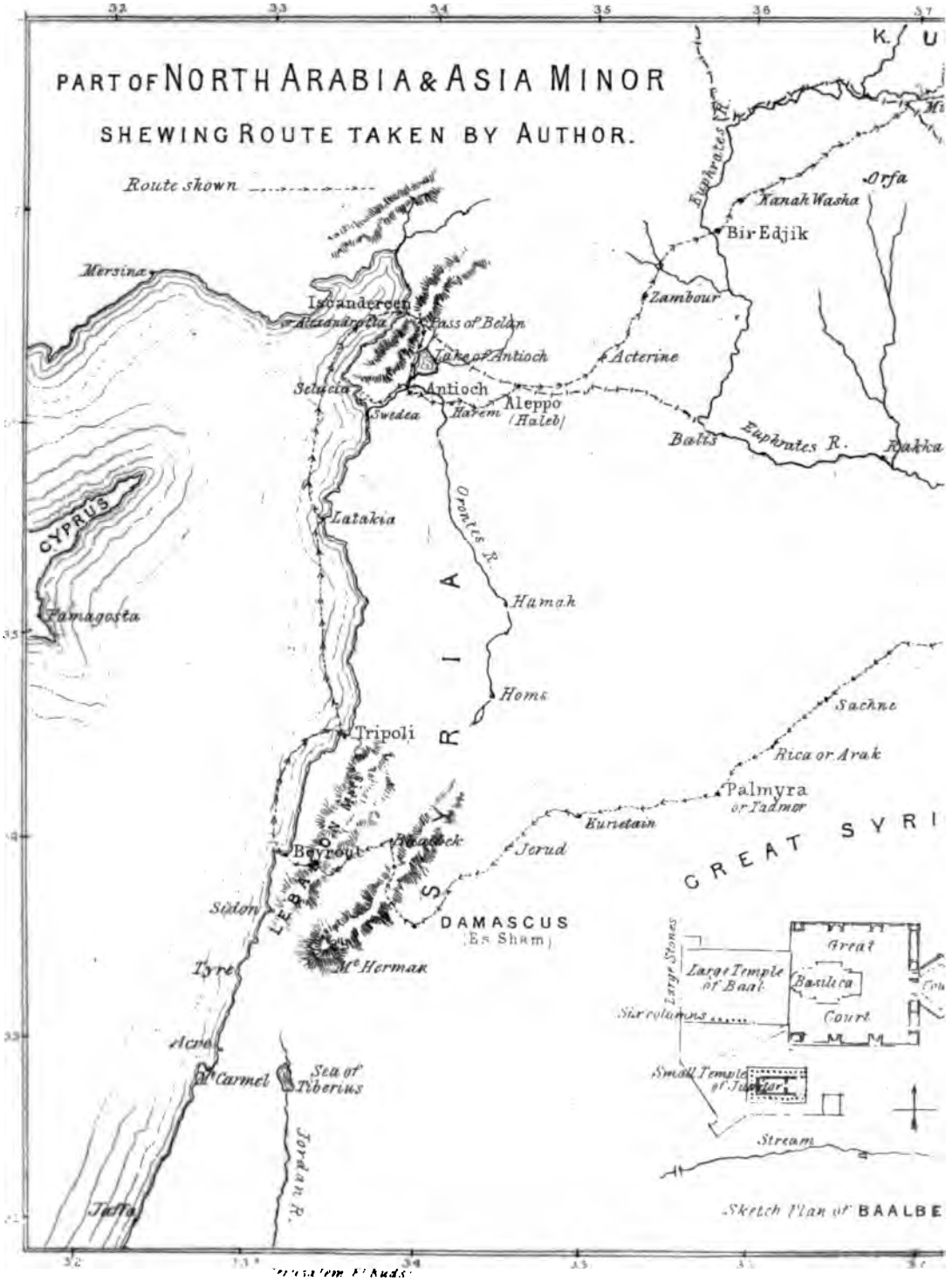
On a Raft and

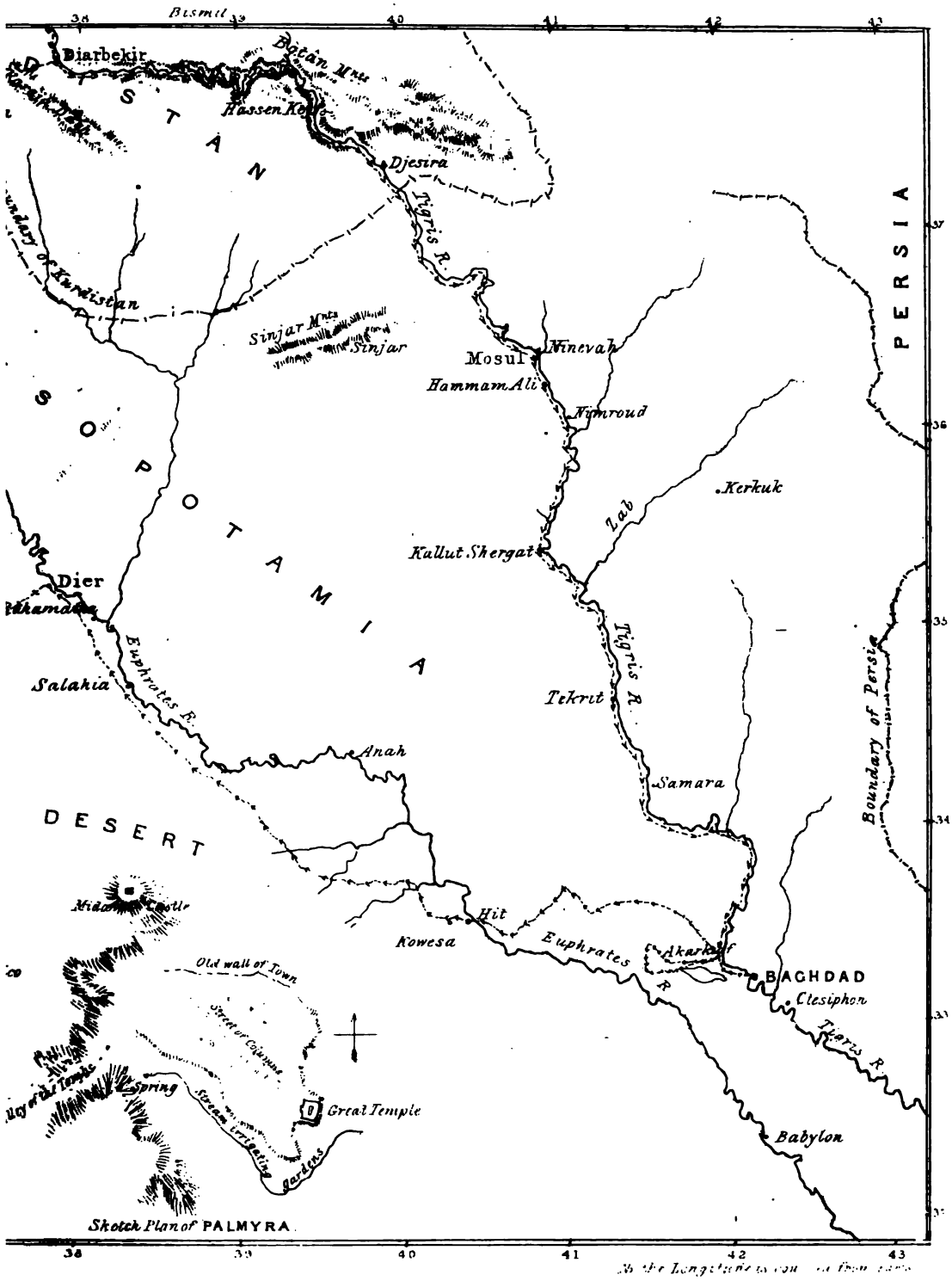
Through the Desert.

Price 52*s.* 6*d.*

Large paper edition, 25 *copies only, numbered and signed by the Author; proofs of the etchings taken from the copper-plates before steel facing, and printed on Whatman's thick white hand-made paper.* SIX GUINEAS.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOL. II.


PART OF NORTH ARABIA & ASIA MINOR
SHEWING ROUTE TAKEN BY AUTHOR.
Route shown
Mersina
Iscanderoon
or Alexandretta
Pass of Beilan
Lake of Antioch
Seleucia
Antioch
Swedea
Harem
Aleppo
(Haleb)
Acterine
Zambour
Bir Edjik
Kanah Washa
Orfa
Euphrates R.
Balis
Euphrates R.
Rakka
CYPRUS
Famagosta
Latakia
Orontes R.
Hamah
Homs
Tripoli
Sachne
Rica or Arak
Palmyra
or Tadmor
Kuretain
Jerud
GREAT SYRIA
Beyrout
Sidon
LEBANON
DAMASCUS
(Es Sham)
Tyre
Mt. Herman
Acre
Mt. Carmel
Sea of
Tiberius
Jordan R.
Jaffa
Large Stones
Large Temple
of Baal
Great
Basilica
Court
Six columns
Small Temple
of Jupiter
Stream
Sketch Plan of BAALBE



As the Longitude is counted from Paris

CHAP. I.

Baghdad as it is.

ALL those who are acquainted with the past history of Baghdad, and the glowing descriptions of its buildings and streets in the time of the Caliphs, will think the present city very mean, and it is so, compared with almost any other great oriental city. Its streets are narrow and tortuous, unpaved, and very uneven. During hot weather they are several

several inches deep in dust, and during rains even deeper than that in mud. Luckily the bazaars in some measure compensate in nearly all ways for the poorness of the streets. Though of modern construction, and somewhat lacking in the picturesque, they are generally broad, clean, well lighted by clerestory windows, yet shaded by the groined brick roof from the sun. The inhabitants are prouder of their bazaars than even of their ancient walls or the few fine mosques that they possess. The Baghdad bazaars surpass, indeed, in structural arrangement almost any others, except those at Kāthimain or Kerbella, which are built in exact imitation of them. As they are entirely constructed of yellow kiln-burnt brick, and as the shops on either side are low compared with the whole height, the narrow strip of colour given by the rows of goods scarcely relieves the general monotony of effect. Nearly all the foreign produce in the bazaars is imported from England. Sheffield cutlery, Manchester cottons, Yorkshire cloths, and London-made preserves and pickles abound. The form of the roof is peculiar to this part of Mesopotamia. The bazaar is divided in its length by a row of cross arches, forming in plan a series of square cells, and the usual dome is supported by four spandrels, groined in a kind of diamond pattern, the edges where the different surfaces intersect being covered with a projecting strip of cement of the same colour as the brick.

From about six o'clock in the morning till ten o'clock the bazaars are so crowded that it is quite difficult to make one's way through them on horseback, Easterns, as a rule, having a callous indifference to the advance of a horse.

[illegible] Baghdad.

For easy progression it [illegible]
front to push the people [illegible]
generally had one or two [illegible]
with loud cries of "Bara[illegible]
their walking-sticks, clear[illegible]
at the rate of quite three [illegible]
greatest at about six in the [illegible]
generally chose for going [illegible]
the great mosque shown [illegible]
culty in choosing a point [illegible]
entirely blocked out by [illegible]
artistic exercise. At last [illegible]
on a slightly rising piece [illegible]
wall, so with the help of two [illegible]
tolerably clear lane in the crowd [illegible]
in front of me. The throng [illegible] country
people, who arrived at that time from the outlying villages
from where they had started at sunrise. The Midan
is properly the grass or fodder market, and is generally
the largest open space in an Eastern town. At Baghdad
it is exceptionally extensive, and is the only place in the
town where one can get the slightest feeling of space.
Towards mid-day the sun beats down on the bare-parched
ground and is reflected from the surrounding buildings till
the oven-like heat becomes even too great for the natives,
and the place is comparatively deserted. A few people are
seen sitting and smoking in the little open cafés [illegible]
the northern side is dotted, and the most [illegible]
are two lame mules, both with an off fore[illegible]
that hobble about picking up what food they can [illegible]

For easy progression it is necessary to have some one in front to push the people out of the way. In my own case I generally had one or two of the Consular kawasses, who with loud cries of "Barak! Barak!" and with the help of their walking-sticks, cleared a path that enabled me to go at the rate of quite three miles an hour. The crowd was greatest at about six in the morning, which was the time I generally chose for going to the Midan to draw a view of the great mosque shown in the etching. I had some difficulty in choosing a point of view where the scene was not entirely blocked out by the crowd that came to witness my artistic exercise. At last I discovered a point of vantage on a slightly rising piece of ground, with my back to the wall, so with the help of two kawasses and my servant a tolerably clear lane in the crowd to see through was kept in front of me. The throng consisted chiefly of country people, who arrived at that time from the outlying villages from where they had started at sunrise. The Midan is properly the grass or fodder market, and is generally the largest open space in an Eastern town. At Baghdad it is exceptionally extensive, and is the only place in the town where one can get the slightest feeling of space. Towards mid-day the sun beats down on the bare-parched ground and is reflected from the surrounding buildings till the oven-like heat becomes even too great for the natives, and the place is comparatively deserted. A few people are seen sitting and smoking in the little open cafés with which the northern side is dotted, and the most noticeable figures are two lame mules, both with an off forefoot dislocated, that hobble about picking up what food they can. There

 is

is always plenty amongst the odds and ends that have been blown from the top of the fodder brought there for sale in the morning. In almost any Western country they would have gone to the knackers at a very early stage of their existence; but Mussulmans have a great objection to killing any animals unless necessity compels, and the idea of putting a beast out of its misery never seems to enter into their heads. So these wretched mules are left to live on, dead-lame, covered with mange, fit companions to the abject street dogs that every Eastern traveller knows only too well.

A short broad street, that may almost be called part of the Midan itself, leads in a north-west direction to the Kerkûk Gate, where a brick arch has replaced the old drawbridge over the moat, that here is still in tolerable preservation.

Proceeding on the top of the glacis to take a tour of the fortifications, one is struck with their former immense strength and thickness. They are now so completely destroyed as to be useless to resist even an attack of Bedaween, whom a tolerably high mud wall is quite sufficient to stop entirely. It was a scheme of Midhat Pacha, when Vali at Baghdad, to change the fortifications into a series of boulevards, and for a short time the works were actively pushed. Like most things undertaken by the Turks it only got as far as the destructive portion, the constructive never having even been commenced. The old bastions are, in many instances, standing like a row of forlorn sentinels at the edge of the fosse, the great size and depth of which almost completely swallowed up the materials of the former wall. Most of the gates are left intact, with the exception of

of the Bussorah Gate at the south of the town, situate amidst the gardens, where, were it not for the soldiers placed to prevent the smuggling of goods into the town, it would be almost impossible to know when the limits of the city had been passed. In smaller undertakings, however, Midhat Pacha was considerably more successful. He built the great barracks, shown near the centre of the etching (giving a general view of Baghdad, looking down stream), by far the most imposing building in the town, causing the palace of the Pacha next it to shrink into mere nothingness. In the centre of the quadrangle stands the clock-tower, said to be the only one in the Turkish Asiatic dominions. The clock, of course, does not go; but that does not detract from the feeling of pride in the hearts of the Baghdaddis at this extremely civilised and Western possession.

On account of all the buildings both public and private being constructed of yellow brick, there is not generally very much opportunity for architectural display, but in the mosques tiles are introduced to break up the monotony. They occur in the spandrels of the doorways in string courses, and frequently the whole dome and minarets are entirely encrusted with them. This is notably the case in the Mosque of Kha-seki, near the Midan. The colours generally err on the side of gaudiness; but from a distance, when the shiny surface brilliantly reflects the sun, the effect is extremely fine. These tile-covered domes and minarets form the great characteristic features of Baghdad, and relieve the city from the appearance of squalor that it would otherwise possess.

The

The gardens of Baghdad, which are celebrated all over Mesopotamia, form by far the most taking part of the town to a stranger. Though scarcely coming up to the Western idea of a garden, as they contain no flowers except those of useful plants, yet they are full of fine palm-trees of every age, from the little shrub that looks like a fern to the tall and slender palm of two hundred years' growth. The ground even in winter is totally devoid of grass, or indeed of anything green, which gives a depressing appearance to the place. The beauty must be sought in the wealth of the foliage overhead in the heavily laden branches of the fruit-trees, figs, mulberries, and oranges. To those who are used to the Egyptian fruit, the dates here, though celebrated further up the Tigris, are comparatively poor. They are very small, rather dry, and of a yellow colour tinged with red. They cannot be compared to those nearer the Persian Gulf at Bussorah, which, although of the same species and colour, are large and luscious, and drip with a honey-like liquid. The mulberry-trees are extraordinarily prolific, and the fruit, both white and black, is extremely large and good. It is dried in the sun and resembles in taste a poor kind of Sultana raisin. In this condition it forms an article of export. The oranges are small compared with those in Syria, but they are extremely luscious and have very thin skins. The sweet lemons are generally more prized than the oranges, though to an English palate they are poor eating. The figs are tolerably good and do not show any marked peculiarity; in fact, Baghdad is in that central region which is too hot for the northern fruits and too cold for the southern, so that it is

is not very remarkable for its vegetable productions. The soil is, however, when properly irrigated, extremely fertile, and makes up for quality in quantity.

The extent of the gardens outside the walls can best be seen from the top of an old minaret belonging to a mosque that has disappeared for many years, perhaps centuries. The first part of the ascent has to be made with ladders, by which means one arrives at the roofs of one of the bazaars. Then there are about 20 feet of rugged brickwork up which one is pulled and pushed by brawny Arabs, any number of whom are always to be found waiting to volunteer service. A small low door, originally giving on the roof of the mosque, leads to the staircase up the centre of the minaret. The steps are now so covered with the droppings of the pigeons which have made this minaret their home, that it is quite difficult to keep one's footing. The view from the top is well worth the trouble of mounting. One sees Baghdad intersected by the broad Tigris, by the side of which far up and down the river, for some eight or ten miles, may be traced the gardens. There is also a belt of green surrounding the town on all sides except the east, where the desert begins, a bare saline earth of a pale brown colour stretching as far as the eye can reach. Three large domes, covered with brilliant-coloured tiles, rise from the tangled mass of houses, through which the streets run like small alleys, visible only close by. A curious effect is produced on the spectator by the minaret not being perfectly vertical; it appears quite unsafe to look over the edge of the parapet on the side to which it leans.

It is on the river that the life of Baghdad may be seen

to

to the greatest advantage. The *cuffas* (round wicker boats) are constantly crossing and recrossing the river, carrying passengers and sometimes even horses and camels. The latter are extremely difficult to persuade to step into the frail structure, and when there present a most absurd and lugubrious spectacle. The banks are generally lined with boats, either lying idle or discharging their cargoes. The largest, never more than 100 ton craft, come from the Persian Gulf, and are sea-boats. They are the most characteristic in form, with a very long narrow prow overhanging the water some 15 or 20 feet, and having at the end an eye for holding the ropes to the mast which carries the jib-sails, the prow serving the double purpose of bow and bowsprit. There is always one mast placed rather forward with a huge lateen sail. In the stern there is a series of cabins for the crew, rising high out of the water, and reminding one forcibly of engravings of European ships of the fourteenth century. The current of the river is generally so fast that unless there is a very strong wind against it, these boats have to be dragged up by ropes. The method is rather peculiar. All along the side of the river posts are driven into the ground at frequent intervals; a man is sent on shore and attaches a rope to one of the posts; the sailors then form a line on deck, and taking the rope in their hands walk slowly towards the stern, the first man when he arrives at a certain point leaves the rope and returns to the prow of the vessel to take it again. Thus may be seen one line of men gradually walking towards the stern and another returning to the opposite end to take their place again at the ropes. Such a boat is shown at the head of this chapter

chapter. The men are generally devoid of all clothing, except a turban; they are a deep reddish hue, are usually very finely developed from the constant exercise, and appear like animated bronze statues, strongly relieved against the white deck. When the vessel has been drawn nearly up to the post another rope is thrown out, which the man on the shore has to attach to the next post. The second rope is then used in place of the other, which is detached ready for fastening on to a still further post. In the town many of the houses abut on to the river, so that no space is left for the passing of the man on shore; he therefore has either to wade, or, inflating a skin that he always carries at his belt, swims to the next landing-place.

There are boats of a smaller kind which also come from the Persian Gulf, but belong more to the rivers and lagoons at its upper extremity, and are not very seaworthy; they are somewhat similar in form, but only half-decked, and seldom of more than 50 tons capacity. Their peculiarity consists in the shape of the rudder, which is of enormous length horizontally, and in depth only a foot or two, very often only one foot; this is necessitated by the extremely shallow water at the lower part of the river at the dry seasons of the year. A reference to the etching of the general view of Baghdad will show the method of attaching these long rudders to the stern of the boat by a series of poles tied together with ropes, forming a species of scaffolding. The tiller is very long and has an up and down movement, enabling the rudder to be raised if necessary almost completely out of the water at the far end, the elasticity of the ropes forming a sort of hinge at each joint. The yard-arm

to

to the lateen sail has a ring of rope that passes round the mast, no iron whatever being used in any part of the boat. The boards are simply pegged to the framework, and the whole coated over with bitumen to the depth of about three-quarters of an inch—a very necessary precaution, as the fitting of the boards and the utter want of anything like caulking between them renders an ordinary coat of pitch of no avail. A still smaller kind of boat is used only for rowing, and is extremely narrow for its length, with very long pointed bows and the same form of rudder.

An English man-of-war lies on the wharf, the gun-boat *Comet*, and there are besides three Turkish and two English steamers constantly plying on the river.

For many miles above and below Baghdad, as well as in the town itself, the creaking of the water-machines is heard from break of day till far into the night. On summer moonlight nights, indeed, it never ceases. These are similar to those used by the Bedaween higher up the Tigris, described in a former chapter, only here they are generally grouped in threes, and worked by horses or mules instead of cattle. There are a few on the principle of the chain and bucket, and it is a matter still in dispute whether that or the older form is the most economical.

The houses in Baghdad are nearly universally built in the form of a quadrangle, with a court in the centre and a gallery round communicating with the rooms on the first floor. With smaller houses the courts have frequently only rooms on two sides, and these generally face the north and east, so as to be constantly in shadow. In larger houses, especially those belonging to Mahometans, there are

are at least two courts, one being for the men and the second being the hareem. The ground floor consists of a series of vaults more than rooms, arched over with brickwork, and frequently with no windows or only very small ones, giving on to the court, the floor being somewhat lower than the level of the court; these are the *surdâbs*, and of course are only occupied during the heat of summer. The rooms on the first floor are generally large, lofty, and well lighted. The interior decoration is sometimes extremely elaborate, the introduction of mirrors on the ceiling being a specialty of Baghdad. Pieces of glass are fitted into one another upon some plaster backing, so that they form facets intercepting each other like those of a diamond. The dining-room of the Residency has not only the ceiling thus covered, but the side walls, down to about 8 feet from the ground; the wall is recessed all round, the upper part of the recesses being covered with stalactite work all in mirror facets. The effect is very bright and sparkling, especially when well lighted up at night.

It is always on the hareem that the greatest efforts of ornamentation are expended. The walls from the floor to the ceiling, as well as the ceiling itself, are covered with every colour of the rainbow in elaborate arabesque patterns. It is universal to make the sides of the room appear like two storeys of a house, there being a string-course about half-way up, and windows appearing above this for the purpose of introducing air and light. In positions where windows cannot be made the wall is niched to imitate them, and where two rooms are contiguous the upper part of the wall is perforated, and closed by glass sashes swing-

ing

ing on a central pivot. When all the windows are open this system allows the free circulation of air during the hot weather, but enables secrets whispered in one room to be heard in all the rest. The windows overlooking the street are overhanging, supported on brackets, and carrying a settee all round. The upper part of the windows is ornamented with coloured glass, introduced in small pieces in a pierced wood pattern, which is painted black or a dark colour. The inhabitants of Baghdad are extremely proud of this form of ornamentation, which they consider belongs entirely to themselves, though its origin is no doubt Persian. In the hareem the windows are always completely covered, either with this coloured glass work or else with a close trellis of wood, through which it is impossible to see from the outside. In the Residency the hareem was remarkably large, and had a set of servants' apartments, &c.—in fact, was a complete separate house, with but one entrance, forming a door of communication between it and the main building. There were staircases on to the flat roof, which was also separated from that of the other part of the house by a high wall. It is the roof of the house that is the most pleasant resort during the evenings, and in summer the inhabitants all sleep there, living during the day in the *surdâbs.*

The town has had an eventful history since it was built by the Caliph Al-Mausom, in 762—6. Its name at that time was Medinat-el-Salem, or the "City of Peace," and it became the favourite residence of the Abbaside Caliphs, and was known as the great seat of Arab learning. In less than a century, or about 873, its population is said to have been

been as much as two millions. At that time it seems to have deserved the old title, but situated as it was almost on the borders between Arabia and Persia it could not long remain in a peaceful condition. It was taken again and again, besides suffering most severely of all Eastern cities from the plague, and finally came into the hands of the Turks some four centuries ago. The population is now estimated at scarcely more than 100,000, and immense open spaces therefore exist between the houses and the old fortifications.

CHAP. II.

Life in Baghdad.

ON the evening of the day of my arrival at Baghdad there was to be a great dinner-party, on the double occasion of the return of Colonel Miles and the marriage of the principal Consular dragoman or writer. His marriage had taken place some four days previously, and, as usual, three days' feasting had followed, during which the bride and bridegroom had to receive their friends night and day. Doubtless they took some repose in the small hours of the morning when guests were not likely to be numerous. The arrival of Colonel Miles on the fourth morning gave occasion for continuing the festivities one day more. Dinner was to take place at eight o'clock, and shortly before that time Colonel Miles, the late Dr. Brearton (English resident physician), and myself rode to the house of the bridegroom, who is one of the richest Christians in Baghdad. Two or three kawasses marched in front to give notice of our arrival, and on our coming to the door any number of ready hands were there to hold our horses while we dismounted and went into the unpretending entrance. We went across a large court, and up a staircase, along a seemingly never-ending gallery, and past a recess where a native

native band was situated making the most terrible din of discordant squeaks imaginable. The instruments were, a violin, a reed-pipe, a species of cymbal, a triangle, and two drums. The music was varied at intervals with the cries of the performers as if in agony, though their faces expressed the utmost satisfaction. We were finally ushered into a long room full of the male guests, and I was surprised to notice that nearly all of them were in European costume, in which loud checks, low collars, and brilliant neckties formed the ordinary features. We found ourselves the only Europeans present, but many of the guests could speak a little French or English. After about an hour's conversation and listening to the hideous noise of the band or the clatter of the preparations for dinner in the next room, the bridegroom came up to us and requested us to follow him to the ladies. We were led by a circuitous passage into a small room which seemed perfectly full of dazzling beauty. Colonel Miles took in the bride, an extremely pretty girl, Dr. Brearton took in another lady, and then, from their not knowing my name, there was some little difficulty about my introduction, and I was motioned towards the whole remaining party. Choosing a girl who looked the most intelligent, I gravely offered my arm, and the others, pairing off, all followed us into the dining-room.

The dinner was entirely in European style, all the dishes being served *à la Russe*, the table was closely covered with tarts, jellies, and dessert, with a row of the original black bottles containing wine and ale running all round in front of the guests. Each one brought his own servant besides there being any number of volunteers, as the remainder of the

the feast is always divided among the servants when the guests have finished. After the usual fish and soup the *entrées* of meat mixed with roasts commenced. At the twelfth course I lost count, though there must have been at least as many more, but the frequent interruptions caused by servants wishing to replenish one's glass with beer (for they naturally consider that all Englishmen like to drink beer), the din of the Arab music which seemed to wax in fury, and the partial deafness of my fair companion, rendered regular counting impossible. Conversation waned, and on looking up I was not sorry to see it was the same case with my two compatriots, though I learnt afterwards it was from a different cause; for neither of them was able to speak much Arabic, and their fair partners knew no other language. The one it had been my luck to choose knew some French, though I soon arrived at the limit of her power of comprehension, and her power of speech was still smaller.

I was surprised that none of the ladies present had dark complexions, being as fair as southern Europeans. Their out-door dress entirely protects them from the sun, and they seem to have none of that dark blood which is prevalent in India. The hair was black with hardly any exceptions, the eyebrows and eyes were also dark, but the skin was frequently of an ivory whiteness, sometimes assisted by cosmetics—in fact, there was not a lady there who did not paint her eyes and eyebrows, and there were very few who did not also colour their lips and cheeks. The eyes are painted in a way much in advance of ours in Europe. Besides the usual dark line under the lower eyelashes, the full

full thickness of the lower eyelid is stained or painted a deep brown or black, and frequently the upper eyelid is slightly darkened all over, graduated towards the edge. The effect is splendid at a distance, and after a time one gets so much used to seeing it, one scarcely notices the means by which the effect has been obtained.

I was disappointed in finding all the ladies were dressed in what is known in the East as the "European costume," there consisting of a straight skirt, even to the ground all round, a more or less elaborate belt round the waist, and either a close-fitting bodice or a "Garibaldi" with a Zouave jacket. For an evening dress the bodice is low, but there is always a profusion of trimming covering the neck —point or other lace, embroidery on muslin, &c. On this festive occasion there was, of course, added a perfect load of jewellery. My partner had two large cascades of jewels with pendants hanging down in front from each shoulder, besides half-a-dozen necklaces, enormous earrings, strings of coins in the hair, numerous bracelets and bangles, and rings covering all her fingers up to the first joint. Most of the other ladies were as profusely bedecked. The hair was carefully parted in the middle, and frequently cut in a crop over the forehead, the rest generally hanging down the back in plaits from one to twenty in number, each with a little gold or silver knob at the end. The state of ease in which the ladies live, and the lack of exercise, cause them to grow very stout at an early age. This is, fortunately for them, admired by the natives, but produces a very unpleasing effect to English eyes. Among the upper classes the figures are bad, the backs are round, and the

contour resembles that of sacks bent from leaning up against a wall. Amongst the lower classes, who have plenty of exercise and not too much to eat, the figures are often very good.

Shortly before midnight we rose from the table, and left the natives to finish the rest of the evening as it pleased them best.

There is quite a colony of Europeans at Baghdad, mostly English, with a few French, Swiss, and Greeks; but nearly all of them knew English, as in all the European social gatherings the English largely predominated. Yet at one party I noticed what seemed very strange, viz. an English and a French lady who did not know each other's language conversing with one another in Arabic. I may mention that so many Englishmen have married Christian natives, that there is a growing race of young people that seem to combine the attraction of both nations, and these are always counted part of the English colony, though Arabic is almost more their native language than English. The people are extremely hospitable, dinners, dances, evening and afternoon parties being of frequent occurrence.

Foremost amongst the entertainers may be counted an enormously rich old Indian prince, known as the Nawâb, whose stout form and broad cheery face is often seen in the streets on the top of one of the most beautiful pedigree mules in Baghdad. He is a direct descendant of the kings of Oude, and prefers to live out of India on account of the dethronement of the dynasty after the Indian mutiny. There are also several minor Indian princes, who owe him allegiance, and have followed him into his self-elected exile.

These

These people form the nucleus of an Indian colony, and the syces, pipe-bearers, and often the best cooks of Baghdad are Indians. The Nawâb himself is a great favourite in European society, where he sustains the character of an English gentleman with great success.

Under ordinary circumstances living is very cheap for the residents, but for foreigners recently arrived it is as dear as Europe, the servants having always some means of making up the difference in purchasing. While I was there the price of provisions was far in excess of the usual amount on account of the famine in Mesopotamia, which, though not felt in any great degree at Baghdad, yet doubled the price of food. The immense number of refugees who came down from the upper Tigris were lost in this large town; the usual army of beggars was scarcely perceptibly increased. This might be partly accounted for by the fact that a great part were drafted off as they arrived into a Khan, and there supported by the Government.

The cafés swarm by the side of the river, and in fact in all parts of the town, to an even greater extent than is usual in Eastern towns. In all of them tea can be obtained as readily as coffee, as on account of the proximity of Persia it is largely in demand. It is drunk in the Russian manner, without milk, but with a great deal of sugar and some lemon, out of peculiar-shaped glasses, difficult to drink from, the base being broader than the mouth. The coffee is taken out of cups of the usual form, but the waiters have a habit of bringing them only half full, and waiting with the coffee-pot in their hand till you have finished be-

fore giving you the second half. I afterwards found this to be a Bedawee custom. Chairs and stools as used in Syrian cafés are scarcely ever seen here, the furniture consisting of large wooden sofas, on which the customers can either sit cross-legged in the usual way, or sprawl at nearly full length. These cafés are generally open spaces, with the roof supported on columns, rolls of yellow palm-leaf matting being let down like blinds on the sunny side.

About the time that I was leaving the weather was becoming so warm, that the surdâbs were being cleaned up ready for use, and we began dining on the roof of the house. Unfortunately the heat had not yet been great enough to kill all the flies harboured by the trees in the surrounding gardens. There was no wind to carry them away, and the dinner was very much impeded by the multitude attracted by the lights. The table-cloth was nearly black with them, from the smallest midges to the mosquitoes, ants, earwigs, and flying beetles of all shapes and sizes, making an intolerable buzzing. They got down one's neck, up one's sleeves, and, stinging one at every point, rendered sitting still a difficult operation. They entered largely into all the dishes, and each mouthful had to be hurriedly cleared of them before being swallowed. It became a matter of the gravest difficulty to pour out the wine and drink it, before the glass became too crowded with insects. It was the day before I left Baghdad, and augured bad weather for my journey, for they are an infallible sign of rain.

The Presidency is one of the oldest houses at Baghdad, and besides the usual garden belonging to, but separated from,

from, all large houses, it has a small one lying between it and the river over which it looks. It is so full of trees that the view is much interrupted. There is a high retaining wall, forming a promenade by the side of the river, and also a quay, alongside of which is moored the English gunboat. Though there are other consuls in the town, we are the only nation allowed by the Turks to possess a man-of-war on the Tigris. We also have the right to possess a guard of English soldiers, now consisting of Sepoys, at the Residency. There are ten kawasses, in the uniform of those at the Embassy at Constantinople, four Consular dragomen, here generally called writers, besides a numerous staff of assistants. There is a postmaster, with his clerks, as Baghdad is the head office of the desert post of Damascus. There are some three or four pipe-bearers and other servants, making a total of about thirty or forty people in the Residency depending on the English Government.

The costumes of the people are far more Eastern in type than those of any of the other cities I had visited. The proximity to Persia gives a love of finery not usual among the purer Arab towns.

The *izzar*, or overall, of the women is generally of brilliant coloured silk, with gold and silver patterns often running through its texture. Yellow boots with red silk or gold tassels are very common, and if a hand is seen it is generally profusely bedecked with rings and bangles. Over the face a similar horse-hair veil is worn as at Mosul, but it is very much smaller, so that it resembles an elongated shade over the eyes, beneath which the mouth and chin

chin can be seen in a profile view. Beneath this outer covering the old-fashioned dress of the "Baghdadia" or Baghdad women is in summer of the simplest description. It consists of a plain under robe of fine gauze-like silk falling from the shoulders to the feet, and provided with large open and hanging sleeves. Over this is another, open in front, and of slightly heavier material, that is sometimes held together in front by a pin or brooch. Neither garment is confined at the waist by belt or sash, and in the hot weather the materials are so thin the figure can be distinctly seen through the dress.

The lady represented in the etching as feeling an orange to see if it be ripe enough to eat is dressed in this manner. It is now old-fashioned, and likely, alas! soon to disappear, except among a few of the older Mahometan families, where the women are never seen by us Christians. The slippers are yellow and pointed, there is a fez on the head with a gay silk handkerchief round it, and usually a gold or silver embossed plate on the top with a hole for the tassel to pass through.

The boys, young men, and even many of the older fellaheen have a short tunic with long pointed sleeves that they tie together and throw over their shoulders when at work. With this costume a broad belt is universally worn, and it is frequently used with others as well. Upon the belt all the ornamentation that the owner can afford is lavished. It is generally made of silk handsomely embroidered with the same material, sometimes so heavily that the thickness of the belt is greatly increased thereby. It is fastened by a hook hid under a plate of embossed silver occasionally set with

with precious stones. Trousers, except by the official Turks, are never worn in Baghdad, but the ziboom and coloured sash with the abba over all. The latter is frequently white, embroidered with gold, and when worn with a pink ziboom, scarlet sash, and pointed shoes of the same colour, produces a very gorgeous effect. The young dandies especially affect delicate shades often very artistically blended and relieved from monotony by some bright or strong colour in the sash.

On the head the Arab caffiah is as much or even more worn than the turban. Under the hot sun it is very convenient, as it can be arranged so as to protect any one part of the face at will. For those who are well off silk is the universal material, woven in gold and colours, but the poor content themselves with a simple handkerchief held on the head by a ring of rope.

CHAP. III.

Round about Baghdad.

OWEVER disappointing Baghdad may be to the casual visitor, there can be no two opinions about it as a good centre for visiting interesting places within a short distance round. Ctesiphon is about twenty miles south, on the banks of the Tigris, and as the desert is perfectly level, the distance there and back can easily be accomplished on horses between sunrise and sunset. The day when I went was extremely fine and hot, for which reason we started at five o'clock in the morning. The horses had not been out for three weeks, and were so fresh we had great difficulty in keeping them from running into and scattering the peasants who were coming into Baghdad with market goods at this hour. The first ten miles, the desert being partly cultivated, was somewhat green, and at this point there is the river, an affluent of the Tigris, that had to be crossed by the ferry. With a rope stretched across from side to side and passed through eyes in the ricketty and leaky ferry-boat (to prevent its descent with the current), one or two men were easily able to drag the boat over by pulling, hand over hand, along the rope. Though common enough in Europe, this was the first time I had seen this method employed

employed in the East. One of the two kawasses that were accompanying me was here left to guard the baggage-mules carrying my bed and provisions that were following us, for the road from here to Ctesiphon is considered a little unsafe. After passing the river the desert became bare and dusty, with an occasional sprinkling of fine sand, evidently blown up from the bed of the Tigris. The south wind caused a slight sandstorm to rise in our faces, and in a very short time the landscape was entirely blotted out to within a hundred yards of us. The fine impalpable powder entered into our eyes, noses, ears, mouths, down the back of our necks, up our sleeves, and in fact wherever there was the slightest opening. The horses were so blinded by the dust that they refused to go faster than a foot pace, and it was a happy relief when, about two hours afterwards, the wind lulled, and we saw a mile ahead of us the magnificent ruin of Ctesiphon, looking like a huge rock jutting out of a sea of sand.

We now came upon a long low mound of earth, the only remains of the fortifications of the ancient city. From the top of this the dome of a mosque with palm-trees could be plainly seen, surrounded by a low wall, where was to be our resting-place for the night. The old priest received us cordially. Leaving the horses picketed in the yard of the mosque, I went on to look at the ruins. They consist mainly of the Lewân, 75 feet wide by 156 feet deep, of a palace, supposed to have been built by Cyrus the Great more than two thousand years ago. The walls at the base vary from 13 feet to 15 feet in thickness, all of solid brick-work. The whole frontage standing is 93 yards long, the

Lewân

Lewân forming the centre. It is ornamented by three tiers of sunk arches, somewhat resembling blind windows of rather rough workmanship. The round tops to all the arches are made of bricks placed with their flat sides set

to the outside, and not on edge as in usual modern construction. This method is employed even in the large arch of the Lewân which is five rings in thickness, and stretches across the whole width. The form of the great arch, continued as a vault the whole length of the Lewân, and rising

rising unsupported from the earth on each side, is most scientific, being a parabola with its axis vertical, the only form of arch that will stand without abutments. The curve is of course continued right down to the ground, being, however, so slight that it is scarcely perceived. It is curious that with this perfect form such a very rude system of building the arch-rings should have been adopted. The total height to the under side of the arch is 108 feet, and the height of the frontage of the arch to the top is about 9 feet more, increasing to about 13 feet at the springing. All the bricks are beautifully finished, are quite square, and measure 12 inches each way and 3 inches in thickness. The Arabs have long ago discovered their usefulness for building, and have made large excavations into the solid masonry and all round the building near the ground. This, combined with the settling of the foundations in several parts, has caused some huge rents to appear in the arch of the Lewân, and a great piece has dropped through, leaving a large hole in the roof. The face wall leans over very much at one end, and it cannot be many years before the whole structure falls to the ground. A Bedawee who had doubtless been attracted by the firing of my gun at the pigeons that inhabit the old holes formerly used for supporting the centring of the arch in large numbers, told me he would show me the way up to the top. We two went together, none other of the party being willing to venture. To mount, it is necessary to hold on with fingers and toes at overhanging bricks, keeping the body flat up against the exterior face of the arch. From the top the minarets of Baghdad can be seen

seen in the far distance, some trees in the way hiding the town itself. The wonderful windings of the Tigris can be traced to one's very feet. Near this part the river sometimes completely doubles on itself, leaving only a few yards of solid earth between. I noticed a crack at the summit of the arch, evidently a new one, for some of the lichens growing on the surface had been sharply split in two.

I descended, and had commenced a sketch of the ruins when I noticed a dark purple cloud rising to the south. The air was perfectly calm, but the cloud came rapidly towards us. I packed up my traps at once, for I guessed what was coming, and we set out to return to the mosque. We had scarcely gone twenty yards when the daylight was blotted out and it became nearly as dark as night, for the dust-storm had overtaken us. Perhaps it was five minutes since we first noticed the cloud. The moderate storm we had met earlier in the day was nothing to this, for it became difficult to make out even the well-defined road of 300 yards which we had to traverse. The wind was fearfully cutting, not from cold, but from being burdened with the sand and fine pebbles, which stung wherever it hit the unprotected skin; so it was a great relief when we got under the shelter of the mosque.

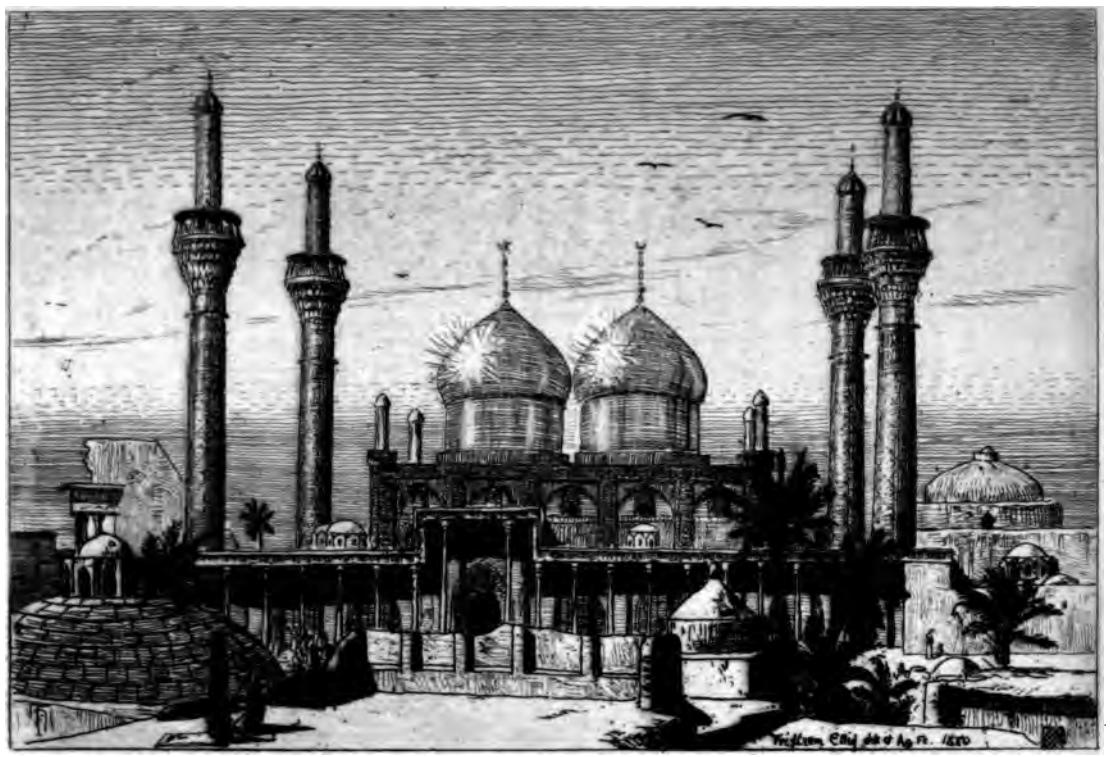
It was nearly sunset, and the baggage having arrived, we made the best meal we could under the circumstances, and retired to try to rest for the night under the portico of the mosque. The space we had was large enough; it consisted of five arches in front, with cross-arches to the mosque, surmounted by five small domes. The heat was

so

so great that the interior walls of the portico were hot to the touch, though no sun had ever been there, and as it was open to the air, the dust-storm kept sweeping in for four or five hours, nearly stifling us all. We had been warned before that there was plenty of vermin, and found it only too true. The storm abated towards morning, and in spite of our persecutors we got some sleep. I was able to make a hurried sketch after breakfast before returning to Baghdad.

The great mosque of Kathimain, although of modern construction, is nearly as interesting a building as the ruin of Ctesiphon, and is much nearer Baghdad. A tramway about three miles long on the west side of the river leads directly to the town surrounding the mosque and bearing the same name. This tramway is one of Midhat Pacha's "reforms," and was formerly worked by the Government at a loss. The present Pacha was persuaded to hand it over to a private company, and it has since paid a large dividend. After leaving Baghdad it passes for two miles over a desert encrusted with saltpetre, but the last mile is through pleasant palm-groves, with the golden domes of the mosque visible in front.

Though on the edge of the desert, and contrary to the usual custom, Kathimain (pronounced by the Arabs Kāsimain) is not surrounded by a wall to protect it from the Bedaween. But the principal streets and bazaars are guarded by gates. In the middle of the town stands the mosque, which is double, and covers two tombs of Shiah saints. The inhabitants are chiefly Persians, and the town is the principal centre of the Shiah religion in the neighbourhood



CHAP. IV.

A False Start.

I HAD not been many days at Baghdad before I began looking about to purchase camels for my desert journey. Every one told me that they were extremely difficult to obtain. Owing to the want of fodder in the desert during the previous spring so many had died, that the owners were keeping back what they had for breeding purposes. However, I luckily found three almost at once. An English engineer who had intended to take the desert journey had obtained three camels, and having changed his plans was anxious to dispose of them. He had bought them some time before, and had entrusted them to a Bedawee to fatten up for the journey. This man knew the desert well, as he had formerly been a carrier or postman between Baghdad and Damascus, but had become too old for the work, which is extremely hard. He had now become a professional desert guide, and was to have taken the engineer across to Damascus.

The camels were supposed to be dromedaries, and always called so, though when I came to know more about camels in general I discovered that they were merely a better kind of baggage camel partially trained for carrying riders, and called

called "*deloul.*" The Arabs divide camels into three classes, the baggage camel, deloul, and dromedary. They bear the same relations to each other as the cart-horse, hack, and race-horse. The dromedary is a very delicate and expensive animal, requiring great care in feeding and driving. Under favourable circumstances it will do from 60 to 80 miles per day for 5 or 6 days together, but after that it is quite useless for a long time.

The direct distance between Damuscus and Baghdad is 450 miles, which have to be traversed in 10 to 12 days at most. There is very little fodder or water to be found on the way, so the camel loses flesh greatly on the journey, and requires to be very fat before starting. In fact the journey is so fatiguing that mail camels can only take it twice a year, although the letter-carrier performs it once every six weeks.

The post across the desert has been established 40 years by the English Consulate at Baghdad for its own convenience, but other letters can be sent by it for a sum equal to about 6d. per letter. It starts each way every two weeks. The number of letters and book packets sent has now become so great that it pays the whole expense of the service, which is costly on account of the large stud of camels it is necessary to keep. The carriers are always Bedaween, and scarcely a single instance is known of the letters failing to arrive at the other end. The post has frequently been robbed by other Bedaween, every valuable, even the letter-bags having been taken. The ordinary letters not containing valuables were of course useless to the robbers, and these have always been faithfully brought

in by the postman. About five years ago was the last time the post was robbed, and then everything was taken away from the carrier including his camels. One shirt was left him, and in this he carried the letters, arriving at Damascus on foot and unclothed. As the postal authorities have for some time past been very strict in searching for money, &c., in letters and parcels, and rigidly excluding them, the robber Bedaween have discovered that it is not worth while to rob the post now, so that it goes unmolested.

My own camels had been fattening for a week or more when I bought them, and were in very good condition, and as it then wanted six days to my departure I hoped they would be remarkably well prepared by that time. The Arab, named Monsour, who was to act as guide, was of the Ageil tribe, generally considered the most trustworthy amongst the Bedaween Arabs, and he had been very strongly recommended to me. His appearance was, however, very much against him. He was a small, thin, slightly lame man, with one sinister eye and a protruding chin, and a very thick rough beard. He was glib with his tongue, but my servant would not translate much, saying it was "old man's nonsense." At first he asked for the whole of the money required for the maintenance of the camels up to the last day, but this I flatly refused, telling him at the same time to bring all the saddles, bridles, water-skins, &c. (that I had bought with them), to the Residency. I promised to give him the money day by day for the camels' food, which he declared could not be got for less than two medjidies.

The contract for acting as my guide across the desert was


The evil eyed old Monsoun.
Camel Saddle.

was understood to be the same as that entered into with the other Englishman, viz. that Monsour should receive in payment the best of the three camels. The advantage to me of this arrangement was, that if we were robbed he would lose his camel, and so he would be very careful to avoid danger. When the contract was put into writing he objected strongly to it, wishing to receive also a large sum of money to keep his wives during his absence. The contract was made out without this addition, and after some demur he signed it, with the promise of extra backsheesh if he proved to be a satisfactory guide.

At the end of five days I desired to see the camels, and ordered them to be brought to the Residency. Monsour declared that it was impossible, for the camels by this time were so frisky with their good feeding that they would be unmanageable in the bazaars. I insisted, and told him I would not give him the money for that day's rations till I had seen them. After a long discussion, in which he tried every means to persuade me to come to his house, he went away grumbling. In about two hours he returned with the camels, and in leading them round the courtyard he made one of them walk over some planking, in spite of shouts and howls of warning from the kawasses and others in the court. The next moment nothing was visible of the camel but his head and shoulders, for he had fallen into a disused well. A great number of volunteers rushed forward to pull him out, and he was dragged up in triumph, but with the loss of a good deal of his hair, which flew about in all directions.

The three camels presented a wretched appearance, for

not only had they lost most of their winter coats in large patches, but they were miserably thin. The wily Monsour had been feeding his own pockets instead of his charges.

I dismissed him on the spot, though with sorrow, as he was so picturesque. Colonel Miles kindly offered me the use of the large and only half-full Residency stables, and the camels were at once comfortably housed. I sent my servant to the market with a hamil to buy fodder, and I found that one medjidie more than covered the whole expense of the day. As about this time I was starting for Ctesiphon, the camels were put under the charge of the head kawass during my absence. When I returned they were fatter and more healthy, though they left much to be desired. After one day more I determined to start, trusting to this season's vegetation in the desert, which I heard was remarkably good.

On the advice of Colonel Miles I applied to the post contractor to find me a guide the day before I went to Ctesiphon. When I returned I heard he had not yet succeeded. During the evening he found a man, and he brought him the next morning. Ali proved a great contrast to Monsour. He was of average height, but appeared tall, for he had a small head. He had gentle, direct-looking eyes, a very slight beard and moustache, and no whiskers, with a complexion almost as dark as a negro's. He seemed rather under forty years of age, and, in spite of his mild appearance, he proved a very hard bargainer. The contract finally agreed on and written out was that he should conduct me to Damascus by the best route over the desert, and "take care of all my camels and all my goods

goods as if they were all his camels and all his goods," that I should give him four liras at starting, and on my safe arrival at Damascus I should give him eight more. Things being now quite settled, he took a little ink at the end of his fingers, he rubbed it on the mouth of the ink-bottle to make it stiff, and lightly dabbed it on his signet-ring, which he then pressed on the paper. The seal of the Consulate and of two witnesses were added in the same way. A Government stamp was placed in one corner, and the contract was complete—without my own signature!

Provisions were laid in under Ali's supervision, and consisted of twenty-five okes (70 lbs.) of dates, sixteen okes (45 lbs.) of flour, and three okes (8½ lbs.) of coffee. This was all that was required by the Arabs. For myself I added five okes of a specially fine kind of date brought up from the Nedjt district, four okes of sugar, a stock of onions, three or four okes of potatoes, six okes of rice, and a potful (about three okes) of *karwama*, which had been made by my servant. This most valuable addition to my provisions is made of mutton-lean chopped fine and boiled in its own weight of fat, then salted and put into a pot to cool. It soon becomes solid, and serves instead of butter for cooking purposes, and also as stock for soup. The inhabitants of Lebanon make it in large quantities during the summer for winter use. A whole sheep, fattened for the purpose, is minced up and boiled down at one time. Besides this, I had left over from my previous journey a few tins of provisions; as one alone was of meat, I tried all over Baghdad to get some others, but without avail. Fish and lobsters were the only kinds to be had.

My

My armament was the same that I had had upon my journey down the Tigris, viz. a Spencer repeating rifle and Colt's revolver for myself, a double-barrelled gun and revolver for my servant, added to which my guide had a brace of pistols and my old Bedawee gun, bought at Mosul. This gave twenty-five shots in all without reloading.

At dawn, on the 5th of May, 1880, I was informed that my camels and three zaptiehs had arrived. The stars were still shining in the grey heavens; there was not a breath of wind nor a cloud anywhere. Ali had not arrived, nor did he appear till sunrise, by which time the sky had become covered with clouds, and it was raining heavily. My guide wanted to put off the start till the next day, but, not wishing to delay my departure, I pushed on the preparations, and luckily the rain proved to be only a heavy shower. The camels were partly loaded, for the rest of the baggage was to be put on them at the other side of the river. The arranging and balancing of the loads upon the camels took so long that it was not till ten o'clock that everything was ready for starting. One of the Consular kawasses was with us, mounted upon a fine red Arab horse. Colonel Miles had lent me his own white one, an extremely restless creature, and there were three zaptiehs mounted upon miserable screws. My servant was on the top of one camel, Ali on another, and the third carried baggage. When we at last got off I was rather in front of the group, and, finding the others did not come up at once, I turned round and saw my servant, looking very white and disturbed, standing in the middle of a small crowd. I rode back at once, and discovered that the camel had thrown him off

off at the moment of starting. He had fallen upon his left wrist and sprained it rather badly. Unfortunately the surgical bandage I had always made a point of carrying with me was in a portmanteau on the baggage-camel, so I tried to bind up his wrist with my handkerchief. Meanwhile the camel became tired of waiting, and commenced jumping about, throwing the luggage off him in all directions, breaking the cords and smashing the horns of the saddle. The portmanteau fell almost at my feet, so I at once got out the bandage, and finished the binding by the time the camel was caught. In ten minutes more the luggage was arranged, and we made a second start. I hired a youth of the Ageil tribe, who had assisted in reloading, to ride on the restive camel till we should arrive at Hit, which was as far as the kawasses and zaptiehs were to accompany me.

I again went to the front, in order to examine a group of tombs a short way ahead, intending to stop there till the rest of the caravan overtook me. I had barely arrived when up galloped my servant upon one of the zaptieh's horses with the news that the camels had been stopped just outside the walls by the collector of the road-dues. I sent the man a rupee to quiet him, though the track we were on could scarcely by courtesy be called a road. Then we finally got away.

Soon after mid-day we arrived at the great mound of Akarkuf, which had been visible all the way, though distorted by the mirage into the appearance of a sentry-box. This monument is constructed of a solid mass of sun-dried brick, now much melted away by the weather. It seems to have

have been perfectly solid, and measured upwards of 150 feet high by about 50 or 60 feet square. The weathering of the material has caused a mound to fall at its base, and it now appears a ragged cube about 50 feet each way at the top of a cone. The remains of irrigating canals can be traced in all directions, with this mound as a centre. There are various lower mounds scattered about the plain, that are supposed to indicate the ancient town of Accad. From the top of one of these the canals can be seen extending southwards to the horizon, but northwards they are limited by high ground a few miles off. There was a great lake shining in the sun to the south whose eastern shore we had already skirted. Its waters are very shallow, and it generally becomes quite dry later in the summer.

As one looked towards Akarkuf, there were several small camps of Bedaween, and flocks of goats trying to find sustenance amongst the cracks of dry earth, where nothing whatever appeared to grow. They were strangely distorted by the mirage, appearing sometimes like a forest of small trees, and again like a regiment of soldiers. While I was taking a sketch fires were being lighted at the camps for cooking the afternoon meal. The smoke rose straight into the still air, giving a quiet, peaceful character to the scene. The broad light belt of earth in front of the ruin, that looks rather like a river in the etching, is desert covered with a white crust of saltpetre. On its further side may be seen another Bedaween encampment, also with smoke rising vertically into the air.

During the whole afternoon we plodded over rich dry earth, so full of fissures that the horses were always stumbling

stumbling from getting their feet into them. The camels' broad soft feet enabled them to bridge over the fissures and traverse this part easily enough. Occasionally a foot would suddenly sink in about four to six inches, and give the rider a nasty jerk, though it did not seem to inconvenience the camel. Luckily for myself I had relinquished my horse, and mounted a camel for the first time in my life. The sensations I shall never forget. Do what I would to steady myself the camel threw me violently backwards and forwards for at least four inches at every step, and I found it necessary to tie on my helmet. The position of riding is charmingly easy if the camel were not moving. One sits upon a luxurious cushion, and crosses one's legs round the front horn of the saddle on to a cushion in front, rather hanging over one shoulder. When tired of one side, it is easy to change over to the other, sit astride, or even sideways like the old-fashioned pillion; and there is no difficulty in sticking on unless the camel jumps, and then one is only saved from falling off by good luck. The camel himself is very interesting to watch. When walking slowly his head constantly swings from side to side in an unmeaning way at the end of his long neck, that looks like a knife edge from above. When urged a little faster his head shoots in and out in jerks at each step like a pheasant's. Occasionally it disappears altogether—he has seen something to eat, and without stopping he nips it off close to his feet. He is very easily troubled with flies, and constantly kicks his body with his foot to brush them off. Each time he puts it down it gives a jar that feels to the rider as if he had made a slip or false step, or even broken his

his leg. Sometimes a fly settles on his nose; so much the worse for the fly, for with a dexterous throw up of his head he jerks his long prehensile upper lip over his nostrils and catches the fly full on the back with a crushing blow. The harness is very simple, consisting of a halter and a wooden saddle bound on with webbing, round the neck, round the chest, and round the belly. A drawing of the saddle is given in the etching of Monsour. The cushion has been removed to show its construction. There are two horns, each spreading out into a fork with the prongs enlarged and flattened so as not to cut into the padding, which is covered with canvass and stuffed with straw, and placed between them and the animal's back. Two pieces of wood on each side, crossing each other in pairs, are fastened to the forks by leather thongs to keep them in place and also as an attachment for the webbing. In front (to the left in the etching) is a small cushion on which the legs rest when crossed, and between the horns another larger one to sit on. The horns are often elaborately ornamented with carving and inlaid work, that is sometimes carried right down the sides of the forks.

Towards sundown we passed a ruined khan, that had been found untenable on account of the roving Arabs who pass north in the summer and south in the winter. Close by was a well of very salt water, but we filled our skins as no other was near, and then pitched our camp for the night.

Soon after starting the next morning we came across a line of telegraph posts, a piece of civilisation that looked very strange in the desert. It continued towards the village where

where we were going, at the nearest point to the Euphrates, on the direct route to Hit. The heat of the sun soon brought on the mirage all round us, and it was not till we had come within a few feet of it that we discovered there was real water out on the desert in front, though nothing but mirage behind us. Keeping near the posts, which were on a slightly rising ground, we skirted its edge till we saw the village of Saklowyah about four miles in front of us. The water lay four feet deep over that distance, and stretched right and left as far as we could see, giving the village the appearance of standing upon a low island. We thought we could easily wade through the water, which was very still, and proceeded to enter it, but before going twenty yards we came upon a quicksand. The animals sunk rapidly, and there was tremendous plunging and struggling before we got back to dry land. We tried several places, but found that at a few yards from the edge the water had everywhere made the soil too "quick" to walk over. At a little distance we saw a caravan of about a hundred loaded mules trying to get to the village, but without success. We came up to each other to learn if there was any other way to Saklowyah. They were men of that village who had tried the best way, and were now going back to Baghdad, having quite given up the idea of going home till the water subsided. It was still rising, and they advised us also to return at once in case we should be caught by the flood.

The whole day we were trying to find a way round the water, and late in the afternoon arrived at an old channel known as the Saklowyah Canal. The guide told us if we could

could cross it we should get on sufficiently high ground to be able to go on to Hit. This old canal runs from a point a few miles above Kaalat Felujah, passes south of the great mound of Akarkuf, and, after spreading out into the lake that we saw to the southwards, joins the Tigris a little below Baghdad. It is supposed to be a Babylonian work, and vessels from the Persian Gulf could go by its means from the Tigris to the most navigable part of the Euphrates without passing the stony shallow rapids above and below Babylon. Its length is little more than twenty miles, and it might be once more opened for traffic without much difficulty. The upper Euphrates could thus again be reached by vessels at all times of the year; at present, owing to the shallows near Babylon, but one steamer can ascend the Euphrates each flood time, and even then it is not always successful in reaching the higher parts. One time the steamer *Mosul*, that we had seen at Tekrit, stuck in the shallows, and could not be got off till the following year.

If the floods are tolerably high, water always runs in small quantities through the Saklowyah Canal from the Euphrates to the Tigris. When we arrived at its banks we found the water forming a broad river 500 or 600 feet wide, and running about six knots an hour. The guide said such a stream had not been known in the canal for forty years. We sought for a place where a small island caused a shallow, and sent in Abdullah, the young man I had taken on to ride the baggage-camel. Before the water was much above his waist he was nearly carried away by the current and had to return. We put him on the strongest horse and sent him in again. This time he went

went two-thirds of the way across, when he got out of his depth. We saw both him and his horse go down suddenly, only the top of his head and the tip of his animal's nose showing above the water. The horse struck out well, so he was able to turn it round and come safely to shore again; but the canal was proved to be impassable.

Under these circumstances it was requisite to return either near or to Baghdad, and this had to be done quickly. It was necessary to pass the same canal lower down near Akarkuf, where the day before it was empty. As we had expected to get to Saklowyah either on the night of the first day or on the following morning we had taken no forage for the horses, and those of the zaptiehs were so tired in consequence that we could not get further than the very spot where we had encamped the night before. In fact one of the zaptiehs had lagged behind during the morning, his horse being too fatigued to go further, and we never saw him again. I luckily had the tent pitched on still higher ground, for the next morning showed the waters had risen till they had covered our previous camping-ground.

We pushed on rapidly the next day past Akarkuf and soon came to the canal, now full of water and spread out to half a mile in width, but shallow. Abdullah led the way, with a long rope to the first camel. The ground was quite firm and there was no appreciable current, and though in one place the water rose to the level of the horses' backs we got through without mishap.

Not wishing again to enter Baghdad, I went on to Kathi-

main

main, and stopped the night at the Nawâb's house, where I was very hospitably entertained. As it was nearly three days since the camels or horses had eaten anything, they ate the whole night through without stopping, as I am able to testify, for a tremendous thunderstorm woke me up several times, and I always heard them tranquilly munching in the yard below the windows.

CHAP. V.

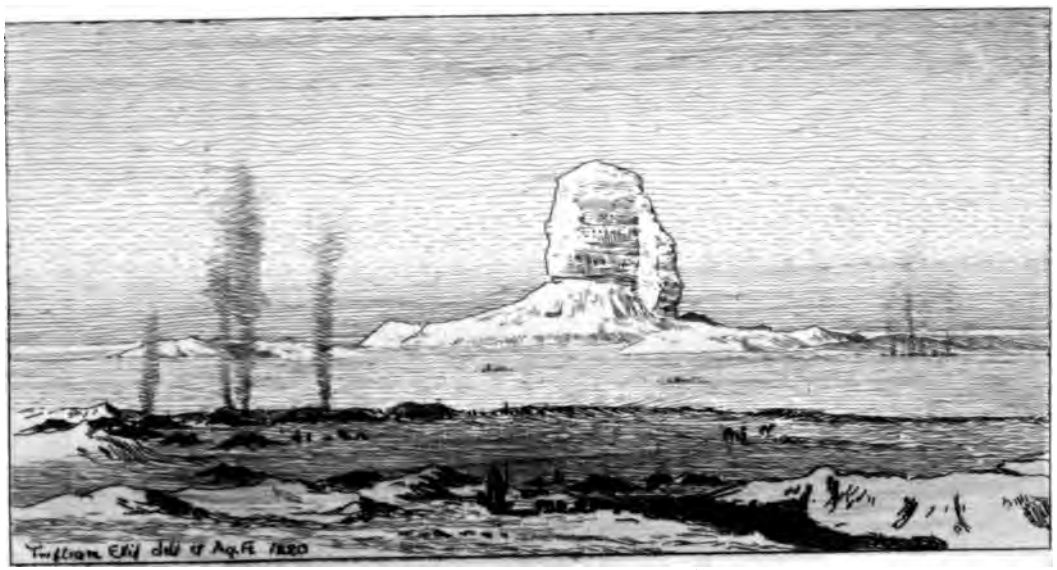
In the Desert.

ERY much refreshed, we made a start the next day, and by my special desire went straight through the middle of the town, as it was far the shortest way, and allowed me to have a last look at the gilded domes of the mosque. The street led me unexpectedly to the very door of the courtyard, through which I was able to see everything within. It seemed much lumbered with fountains and little praying places. There were many people (most likely pilgrims) even at that early hour. The revenues of the mosque are drawn from the offerings of the pious who flock from all quarters of the world. To avoid entering we had to turn aside from this road and pass round a narrow pathway outside the wall of the courtyard. The wall was under repair, and therefore so low I could easily see over it. The people of the place looked very black on Christians and Sonnies for coming so near the sacred edifice, but we were too well-armed a party for them to interfere with. Besides the armament before mentioned, I had a kawass and two zaptiehs fully equipped. The ground was very wet and slippery from the rain that had fallen during the night, and to my horror I saw my best camel slip in turning the corner of the mosque

mosque yard, and after a struggle fall down heavily on his side. It is generally said that when a camel falls he breaks his leg, and when he breaks his leg he must be killed. It would have been very awkward here, not only because of losing a camel at the start, but because we were close to the mosque and surrounded by Shiahs. After being partly unloaded, it was induced to take the kneeling posture, and I was much relieved on seeing it rise and walk off, not even lame.

After leaving the town we went due north for some distance in order to avoid the canal, and keeping Akarkuf in sight turned off to the west. We travelled on till nearly sunset. There was no food for the camels, so as soon as we had cooked and eaten our dinner, which took about an hour and a half, we went on for four hours more in the night.

After two hours of monotonous rocking on the camel, I noticed little bright specks on the horizon to the south that appeared and disappeared like a lanthorn behind trees. On inquiring in rather a loud tone of my servant Milhem, who was half asleep, what they were, Ali held up his hand, and spoke some words in a low tone to Milhem. Translated to me, they were to the effect that we must talk low as these were the fires of Bedawee encampments. The tents interrupted the light as we travelled and caused the intermittent appearance. For two hours we continued watching them, when they also commenced showing in front, and then our guide thought it advisable to stop. The ground was perfectly level, with no sheltering hollow or ridge, so we camped quietly, not speaking a word above a whisper,



Indian encampments round Albuquerque

ר

whisper, and the animals were too tired to make any sound. We did not pitch the tent, as it would have been visible in the morning from a great distance round.

We started well before sunrise, going rather northwards to avoid the Bedaween, who have here a very unenviable reputation for thievery. A pool of water, in a convenient hollow, that we came upon after two hours, made us choose this place for breakfasting, and as there was plenty of food for the camels we rested some two hours. Unfortunately there was none fit for the poor horses, that had tasted nothing all the previous day. About mid-day we came again upon the flood-waters of the Euphrates; but this time we were on the right side, and nothing could hinder us from getting direct to the ferry at Hit. As soon as we had come down to the fresh and transparent water the Mahometans knelt down and said their prayers. This was the first time I had seen any of them doing so, except Ali, who was most particular about his. In the distance hills could be seen that were at the far side of the Euphrates, and at their bases rose many columns of smoke, indicating a large tribe of Bedaween encamped.

We continued to skirt the water the whole day, and presently came across frequent small camps of Bedaween. They belonged to a very poor branch of the Shummur Arabs, and were quite harmless people. There were very few men in the tents, as they were away seeking pasturage for their camels. We inquired for milk at every camp, but only got it once, for the poor people had lost most of their flocks during the past winter. While waiting I had ample opportunity for examining the tents. They were made, as

is usual, of black camel's hair cloth, a material that, besides being waterproof, is so durable that it lasts for many generations. The spread of the cords supporting the tent is always very large, though the tent itself is low, the upright posts supporting the middle being none of them as high as a man. All the operations of cooking, &c., have consequently to be done outside, the tent being only used for sleeping in and for storing materials. The women, though very ugly when old on account of the numerous deep wrinkles all over the face, are rather pretty when young; and the children, especially the boys, are often extremely good looking. Bedawee clothing is scant. In the hot weather the women seldom wear more than one dark blue cotton garment, confined at the waist with a belt or handkerchief, but the amount of material twisted on their heads would be quite enough to form a second. It is always passed under the chin and round the neck, so as to protect the throat from sudden changes of temperature, and from below the folds the hair hangs down in many plaits. The women all had nose-rings, those of the older ones being passed through the middle cartilage and worn large enough to cover the mouth, the lower lip of which was stained dark blue. Many bracelets adorned the arms, and the richer had silver ankle-rings. They were copiously tattooed on the lower part of the face, the back of the hands, the middle of the forehead, and the feet and legs. The children's dress was far simpler than the women's; the girls had but one short garment, and the boys had nothing at all. As a general rule when we approached an encampment we saw the mothers gathering the children together and

and packing them out of the way, but the boys would often escape and keep dancing round looking like so many brown frogs. The tents were long and low, divided by a grass matting partition into unequal divisions, the smaller being the hareem and the larger for the men and animals. The furniture is simple, but quite enough for those who are continually "flitting" like the Bedaween. It consists of a low table, a stone handmill, pestle and mortar for the coffee, two or three coffee-pots, cups, a large and small copper pot, iron girdle for bread, wooden bowls, spoons, &c., coarse carpet, some blankets, and a napkin long enough to go round the table and serve all the guests at once.

On the morning of the third day after leaving Kathimain we saw a dark cloud on the horizon, that Ali told us was lying over Hit. It is a small walled town of about three hundred houses, standing upon a slight hill almost entirely composed of bitumen, which here springs boiling out of the earth. The dark cloud of smoke that we had seen was from these springs, lying close to the river Euphrates. To the north of the town there are large natural salt pans, surrounded by low cliffs of glittering gypsum. The inhabitants burn this in kilns with the bitumen as fuel, and produce very good plaster of Paris. This, together with the bitumen, gives a commerce that is the cause of the existence of Hit. It has nothing else to recommend it, being entirely surrounded by desert, a long distance from any town, and there is no natural vegetation. On each side of the river for a short distance above and below the town there is a narrow fringe of gardens. The water for irrigating them is drawn from the Euphrates, and raised by

 Persian

Persian wheels turned by the current of the river. These are about 20 to 25 feet in diameter, and are made of branches of trees tied together with rope. These boughs are extremely crooked, and the largest piece is not thicker than a man's arm. Some clay pots are tied to the periphery at uneven distances. The wheels groan and creak as they turn, and half the water that is raised misses falling into

Mill on the Euphrates.

the trough and is shot back into the river. They are generally built in groups of four, six, or even eight, and together give about as much water as would flow through an ordinary 2½-inch pipe. Such a group is shown in the foreground in the etching. On account of the river's varying width at different seasons, the wheels are placed some distance from the banks, the water being conducted by picturesque

picturesque viaducts, roughly constructed, and forming the most striking feature in any view of the town. Stone is used as the material for all the buildings, cemented with plaster of Paris. The buildings are consequently always falling into ruins from the weather, and the high minaret in the middle of the town is dangerously cracked from top to bottom, and by no means upright. The town is usually entered by two gates, but the walls are in such a ruinous condition that there are a good many entrances through ruined houses on the exterior.

Near the river's bank by the bitumen springs I noticed numbers of long constructions, which I took at first to be houses. They proved to be large flat-bottomed barges made of wicker-work of palm leaves and stems, covered with bitumen to make them waterproof. They hold from one to two hundred tons each, and are used to carry the plaster of Paris and bitumen down the river.

The Euphrates was so swollen that the ferry-men would not put off the boat from the other side. I therefore sent two of my zaptiehs over in a cuffa to summon it to come over at once. They returned to say that it was impossible, and brought over one of the ferry-men to prove his point. As I had been confidently informed by Ali that it was mere laziness on their part, I would not listen to what they said, but sent them back at once saying I would have them punished by the Kaimakham if they did not immediately bring the ferry-boat. The result was that in about half-an-hour we saw it being slowly dragged up stream on the opposite side, to compensate for the distance it must be carried down by the current. It presently put off, with half-a-dozen

half-a-dozen men rowing like maniacs. Through some clumsiness the boat was allowed to swing round till it almost headed down stream, and before they could right it was carried past us out of sight. The next news I heard of it was that it had come in contact with an aqueduct and was broken in pieces. Luckily this proved to be usual Arab exaggeration, but the boat was so far damaged as to prevent us crossing that day.

I had my tent at once pitched at the edge of the river, and used up my spare time by sketching. We heard news from the people of Hit that the postman who had been due for four days from Damascus had not yet passed through Hit. Also that the desert near the middle was at present populated with a tribe of Arabs that were hereditary enemies of the Ageil tribe, to which both the postman and my own servants belonged. Ali therefore deemed it inexpedient to take the postal route, but advised a tour up the side of the Euphrates, and then keeping north through the desert by Palmyra. This was what I had most ardently wished, but the season was so far advanced that I thought the extra time required would have brought me too late in the season for travelling; besides, Colonel Miles had told me that I should be most certainly robbed. But Ali seemed tolerably confident of my safety under his guidance, so, after a little politic hesitation, I agreed to go that route, to his great satisfaction.

While I sat near the door of my tent near sundown, two camels with travellers arrived at the ferry. The front one carried the baggage, and on the top of it an extremely small man. On coming closer I perceived him to be Monsour, regarding

regarding me curiously with his one eye. The camel behind had apparently a couple of hurdles slung upon his back; these turned out to be wooden panniers of very rude construction. A man was sitting in each, with his knees up to his chin, looking very uncomfortable. They were two travellers bound also for Damascus, and were both natives of Syria. One was a Turkish judge, Joseph Effendi by name, on leave of absence, and the other, Kalîl, his servant, a Christian. Their intended route was by the Euphrates and Aleppo to Iscanderoon, from there by ship to Beyrout.

Hearing that we, so small a party, were going to brave the desert and save at least three hundred miles over their route, they asked permission to join us. After some little diplomatic delay I consented, knowing the immense advantage of numbers on the intended journey. Just at sunset the ferry-boat unexpectedly appeared, but in such a leaky condition that it was not considered safe to send over the camels, so we agreed to wait till the morrow, when the holes could be mended with bitumen, in place of the mud that had been used. We had a wild thunderstorm at night, which I hoped would be the last of the series we had been having, as, on account of the weakness of the camels, I had determined to leave the tent at Hit.

The whole party got over the river without accident next morning. We waited on the other side a short time to enable our companions to make some alterations in their saddle gear, and meantime coffee was made and food prepared. We were constantly surrounded by a crowd of gazers and friends of our guides, to whom coffee was served out with a liberal hand. We also had a visit from the Kaimakham,

Kaimakham, the Mudir, and all the notabilities of the town.

I had a good opportunity of noticing the women of the town as they came to fetch water. They were, as I had been previously told, very handsome, with olive complexions and brown eyes, and red unpainted lips. Though all provided with nose-rings, they were but slightly tattooed, generally having a small ornament at the end of the nose, at the middle of the forehead, a spot on each cheek, and one on the chin.

While this was going on, we witnessed one of those incidents which can only occur in an out-of-the-way part of the East. We heard women's screams on the other side of the river, and our whole crowd jumped up to see what was the matter. We saw three women on the other side running down the bank with their arms up in the air. As soon as they got to the shallow edge of the water they flung themselves in, beating their breasts and screaming at the very top of their voice. It was not till it was all over that I discovered that the cause of all this row was simply that a cuffa, containing two men, had come, as the women thought, too near a group of water-wheels. As they had never seemed in any real danger, I could not possibly have guessed that this was the reason of their lamentations. The women presently got out of the water, dried themselves in the sun, and walked away unconcernedly.

It was at least three hours before we got under way, and then we made straight for the little village of Kowesa, four hours off on the post-road, with the hope of meeting the postman, who had even yet not arrived. The sun was hot,

hot, the desert was sandy, and there was a sirocco blowing, so that the four hours to the village would have been very tedious had it not been for four Arabs who joined our caravan for protection to the village. They were full of antics, going in front and hiding behind knolls, pretending to frighten each other by jumping out, pretending to beat each other with sticks, and behaving like a set of children on a holiday. The village appeared like a blue mist, from the excessive heat, till we were close to it, when it developed into palm gardens and fields of ripe corn, looking cheerful and bright after the barren desert. The gardens were all outside the walls, no green thing whatever appearing inside, only a mass of plastered huts and narrow alleys.

Our entrance made quite a sensation, for it was some years since any travellers had passed in that direction. The women and children came out of all manner of little doorways, and seemed to spring from the ground. They were better looking than those of Hit, the tattoo marks were smaller, and the nose-rings for young girls a mere little gold boss on one nostril, though the old women still rejoiced in their mouth-hiding pendants.

We went to the house of the brothers Abdul-Mejid, where a magnificent repast was presently prepared for us. While lounging on the roof, waiting for the meal, I was startled by the noise of smashing wood just below me, and on looking down I perceived one of my camels, with my best saddle, quietly walking through a door much lower than the horns of the saddle. The noise I had heard was the utter and complete destruction of the saddle-horns as he pushed through. The Mudir, the collector of taxes, and a schoolmaster

a schoolmaster came to do us and the supper honour. It was served in the true Arab style. We sat on the roof of the house cross-legged and in a circle round a large tray of basket-work, on which rose a mountain of pilau, flanked by numerous small plates of meat prepared in different ways. We ate with our fingers with fearful rapidity, for a crowd of the poorer people were waiting for the remains. As soon as we had finished they sat down, and after a very short scramble nothing remained. At this village there is no good clay, so all the water-pots, drinking-cups, and basins are made of woven palm-leaves, covered with bitumen to make them watertight. The roofing-timbers, door-posts, &c., are all made of palm, which is the only kind of wood known there. We slept on the roof, as the weather was becoming far too warm for sleeping indoors.

CHAP. VI.

Further in the Desert.

RESENTING my host with a pocket-knife of Sheffield manufacture, with which he was very much pleased, I got off with my party about an hour after sunrise. I finally chose the largest dromedary for riding, using the saddle which was broken on the previous day, as I found that it was much easier for rapid mounting now both the horns were worn off. The camel had such a knack of jumping up directly she felt any weight upon her, that this was a great advantage, whilst she was so easy in her movements that it was never necessary to hold on.

As we quitted the village we met long lines of women bringing the drinking water from a spring rather more than half a mile off, of a kind that was not quite so brackish as the spring inside the village that watered their gardens. Our two hosts accompanied us for about half an hour, till I pressed them to return. After many polite excuses they complied.

All trace of the pathway soon disappeared, but my guide told me that the slight knolls rising out of the almost dead level were the landmarks for the "post-road" to Damascus. The soil was hard and stony, with no vegetation. In another

another hour, Ali and Monsour having had a consultation as to the best road, we turned suddenly towards the north-west. By this means we hoped to avoid the Arabs on the borders of the Euphrates above Hit, and yet not get too near the other Arabs near the centre of the desert. About mid-day we came to a spring that bubbled up at the summit of a mound, and ran down the sides, making brilliant green and darker reeds to grow in a tangled mass. The water was clear and pure, but so strongly impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen that I found it impossible to sit near it. The camels drank largely, and the Bedaween did not mind it in the least, but took it in great quantities, and then sat down and made coffee at the mouth of the spring, while the judge and I ate our luncheon well to the windward. As there was nothing good for the camels to eat, we soon got on our way again.

The character of the ground rapidly changed; deep gullies occurred at intervals of a few miles; some of these had steep and rocky sides, making it very difficult to cross them. They were all of them quite dry, but were evidently the beds of powerful torrents during the rainy season. They descended rapidly in the direction of the Euphrates, which was about twenty to thirty miles off, parallel to our route. Tufts of a plant bearing a yellow flower, which the camels ate greedily, grew thickly in the depressions, and even in the high land there was plenty of forage for them in the scrub that thinly covered its surface. We went rather slowly here, as the camels nipped the food as they walked, and were so hungry that they were continually stopping unless prevented. We had made a comparatively short

short day's journey when we arrived at a broad and deep valley, with plenty of green, and a small winding stream near the middle. Though it still wanted two hours to sunset, we thought it was better to halt here for the night, as our guide assured us we should have no water for two days after this. We therefore made our camp by the side of the stream, that was slightly salt like most desert springs, but not so bad as the last. As we had no tents it was a short operation; my camp bedstead was arranged ready for use, and the luggage piled in an oblong heap formed my servant's bed. The others laid their mattresses on the ground. We had barely time to finish our cooking, when the sky became overcast with clouds, and a little rain fell during our supper. There were two thunderstorms going on, one at each side of us. We hoped to miss them both, but had the camels brought in at once for precaution. We had only just finished our supper when the two thunderstorms coalesced over our own heads. I slipped into bed instantly, with my waterproof sheet over me; my servant followed my example, only using his cork mattress as a roof. The others huddled themselves on their mattresses in a heap round the fire, and threw on all the clothes they had, but they were not nearly so quick. The duration of the storm I cannot tell, for I went to sleep to the sound of hail rattling on the outside of my waterproof sheet, which I had drawn over my head. When I awoke in the grey morning I found everyone else fast asleep, and excessively damp. It took some exertion on the part of my servant to get them into motion. Luckily rheumatism is nearly unknown in the desert, for the rain is never continuous, and between

between the showers the air is so dry that the clothes never remain wet.

It was well after sunrise before we were again on the way. We had to turn due west in order to find a path out of the valley, and as we did so we saw behind us on a neighbouring hill one of the Bedawee encampments we had been trying to avoid, and which had been hid by a rising ground when we made our camp. Whether we were seen or not we could not tell, but no attempt was made to follow us. The rain had rendered the ground so slippery in some parts of the valley that it became very dangerous for the camels, and we had to make frequent short halts to rest them. In going up one slight acclivity, Monsour's two camels bumped up against each other, and after slipping and floundering about they fell heavily on their sides. Poor Monsour was in an agony, and rushed up to unload them. As soon as this was done they rose to their feet, to our great relief, uninjured. Of course time was lost in reloading, and as we were still near the Bedawee encampment we sent out a scout and looked anxiously round. We thought ourselves very lucky that we were not molested.

The day passed without further incident. The gullies seemed to increase in size, and number, and difficulty. Late in the afternoon we struck the caravan road to Deir; and as we were now well out of the line of Bedaween we resumed our travels at night by the misty light of a three-days' moon, that just enabled us to distinguish the track.

I was struck with the number of graves that covered every little knoll or slightly rising ground. They were the final resting-places of those poor pilgrims that had been unable

unable to endure the hardships of the desert, and had been buried by their companions hurriedly during the march. Seldom more than an oblong pile of stone marked the place, but here and there, where doubtless the bones of a more than ordinarily holy man rested, quite a large cairn had been raised, and round it many smaller piles of stones. Once where a bush had been planted over the grave, there were still attached to the dead branches little fluttering rags that had long ago been placed there by the faithful. It looked weird and desolate in the middle of the utter loneliness of the desert.

The chief incident of the next day was that Ali lost his way, having wandered out of the caravan route where it was not easy to see. He would not at first admit himself to be wrong, though after some time of very erratic wandering my servant said casually, "We are going like a ship without a rudder, for Ali does not know the direction we ought to take."

I at once ordered a halt; then dismounting, I borrowed Ali's long staff, and suspending it carefully upright, took the direction of the shadow, which I marked on the sand. I then drew another long line at right angles, knowing that in a sun-dial two right angles make twelve hours. This I divided into twelve parts. I found from my watch that it wanted two hours to mid-day, and thus two divisions in front of the shadow gave me what would be its position at mid-day, and therefore also the true north and south. From this I constructed a compass, and took the direction we were making for (the first bend of the Euphrates) from my map. The whole process was watched with breathless interest

interest by the Arabs, and when I advanced as guide they had no hesitation in following me. At night I held on my way by the stars, and the next morning we came in sight of the bend of the Euphrates I was making for, and struck the caravan route at the same time, to their great surprise.

It was just then we saw a group of Bedaween, with many camels, and Ali told us to get our arms ready. They turned out to be simply one or two men minding a flock of camels, and were much more frightened of us than we of them. Many of the camels were only a few weeks old, with heads like young donkeys without the long ears, and their bodies covered with a thick wool. They danced and played and gambolled about in a clumsy lamb-like manner, for their feet and legs are disproportionately thick, like those of a puppy.

From the top of a slight eminence we had an extensive view of the Euphrates, which here is full of islands. It lies in a shallow valley, about two to three miles wide, full of tamarisk bushes and trees. In the foreground was the ruin of Kallat-jebirah, of which scarcely anything stands, and a small fort upon the same hillock. It is doubtless the remains of one of that line of citadels which guarded the ancient Babylonian road down the Euphrates. There was a large number of Bedaween in the valley, with encampments on both sides of the river. They were a harmless and well-disposed tribe, protected and kept in order by soldiers living in forts at frequent intervals along this side of the river, which is comprised within the pachalik of Deir.

It was now the third day since we had had any fresh water, and what was left in our skins was becoming very unpleasant,

pleasant, so it was a great pleasure to sit down by a small branch of the river where the water was clear and cool. We got a good bathe also, especially old Monsour, whose brown shrivelled body seemed never to have had enough of the water. There was no time to be lost, however, and we pushed rapidly towards Deir, and near sundown we arrived at an extensive encampment buried in the blue-green foliage of the tamarisk trees. We collected fuel to make coffee for the visitors who at once flocked towards us in large numbers, for Ali intended to hold a consultation as to the advisability of crossing the desert direct from this point. We found that this encampment was called a village (by name Werdi), although entirely composed of tents. There was a Mudir, a Mufti, and a commandant of the troops in the fort, which was so hidden by the trees that we had not at first perceived it. We received a visit from these worthy gentlemen, from whom we were able to get more trustworthy information than from the ordinary Bedaween. They told us that it was impossible to pass over by Palmyra on account of two tribes being at war on the direct road, and it would be impossible to escape meeting some of the wandering parties of armed men.

As the sun set a faint mist began to rise from the level, and with it a cloud of the largest mosquitoes I have ever seen. Though they seemed to have no effect on the inhabitants, we were so much troubled by their stings that we determined on immediate flight. During the short time it took to pack the luggage the cloud increased in density till the air was black with these abominable insects. We could hardly keep the camels, maddened by the stings, on

 the

the ground whilst they were being loaded. Abdullah, whose scant clothing gave ample opportunity for the mosquitoes to attack him at almost every point, skipped about like a lunatic, slapping himself all over as he hurried on his work. We all assisted, and it was not more than two minutes before we were off.

The ground was thickly studded with tree-like bushes, against every one of which the camels tried to rub themselves, knocking against each other and nearly throwing off their riders. When there were no trees they would suddenly throw themselves on the ground and try to turn over. We were all of us in roars of laughter at the antics we cut in the misty moonlight, for the mosquitoes were still following us in multitudes, and it was very difficult to keep together under the circumstances. Suddenly Ali disappeared, but a cry from a rather higher tamarisk than usual told us he had been swept off his camel and was left high and dry amongst the branches. The camel did not run away, as it was busy scratching itself, and he was able to jump again into the saddle, only to be immediately thrown off by the camel trying to turn over. This was too much for even his gravity, and for the first time in the journey he broke into a real laugh. For three hours we ran away, when being tolerably clear of mosquitoes we lay down to sleep, wrapping up our heads and faces carefully in our cuffias.

Previously to this experience I had considered myself proof against mosquitoes, and did not use mosquito curtains, being perfectly well able to sleep even when my face was covered with them. But on this occasion when I got up the next

next morning one eye was completely bunged up, the other I could only just see out of, and my hands looked as if they had boxing-gloves on. The swelling lasted for several days.

The day passed without incident, except the purchase of a fat lamb, off which we all made a feast, being the first meat we had tasted for nearly a fortnight. The road lay along the bottom of the valley close beside the river from which we drew our supplies of water. The castle of Rahamatha came into sight next day, and showed that we were but a short distance from Deir. Like that of Aleppo it is built upon a cone originally faced with stone. It had evidently been built at two epochs, the older being probably Saracenic, and the latter of later date than the conquest by the Turks, by whom it was held as a fort until recent times.

At sunset we were opposite the village of Abîd, and camped there in order not to be too near the town of Deir during the night. We had another tropical thunderstorm before morning, the last of the season. We protected ourselves as before, in the absence of the tent.

Deir is a walled town of about 1,000 houses. Under the present Governor, Ali Pacha, it has thriven immensely, and new houses are springing up all round the walls. The gardens have extended for many miles on both sides. The river subdivides itself into numerous channels just opposite the town, forming islands that are now covered with verdure and most carefully cultivated. The whole neighbourhood has a very thriving appearance. We learnt here that the way was clear between us and Palmyra, so

 after

after an ineffectual attempt to buy some extra provisions, we turned straight into the desert.

The ground at first was very broken, and we crept up beside a small stream for about two hours. Ali was leading, and I was just behind him. I noticed him slip off his camel without stopping it, and run forward on the track to the edge of a depression over which it disappeared. He crawled carefully on his hands and knees and looked over. He ran back at full speed with his hands to his mouth, making signs for us to stop. He told us hurriedly that there was an armed Bedawee force in front baking bread, and he had seen the smoke rising into the air. We directed our steps down a gully in order if possible to get round them without being seen. The camels objected decidedly to being taken out of the track, and made [illegible] sounds which the Bedawees must have heard, for [illegible] long Abdullah, who acted as scout, told us they were [illegible]. We made our camels kneel down in a circle [illegible] behind a slight hollow, and then marched in a [illegible] up a little knoll to meet the foe. Ali and myself led, then came Mithem and Kalil, and behind Joseph Effendi, Abdullah, Mansour and an Indian who had accompanied their party on [illegible] These four were unarmed save with heavy sticks, that at a distance in the glare of the sun might easily be mistaken for guns.

Two Bedawees, splendidly mounted and armed with long spears and swords, were advancing towards us. They were each dressed in a single white shirt with long sleeves, their legs bare to the knee and their arms to the elbow. On their heads were black cuffias. They were riding without stirrups

stirrups and merely rope-bridles. The heads of spears of the main party we saw over a rise in the distance. My first sensation was one of curiosity. I saw for the first time the real wild man of the desert on the war trail. They certainly

looked splendid with their deep-red brawny skins and white dress in the glare of the sun. It seemed a thousand pities I could not get them there and then to pose as models. The two scouts shouted out to us to declare our business and to lay down our arms. "They are robbers," said Ali

Ali. "Of what tribe?" I asked. He had scarcely replied "Shammur," when, dropping on one knee, I sent a bullet over the head of the foremost Arab, for we were upon the Anezeih territory, which proved that they were robbers, as there is an hereditary feud and constant war going on between the two tribes. A bullet from my servant's gun hit the ground just below the horses' feet. The two halted, and one turned to join the main body. Seeing that I was manipulating my rifle in a way that showed it was a repeater they both fled, and I sent a second bullet that went over their heads and over the heads of the main body behind, and sent up a great cloud of dust some 300 yards beyond them all. We then retired within the circle of our camels, intending to use them as bulwarks in occasion of a direct attack. We waited some five or ten minutes, and as no one appeared we sent off Abdullah to a neighbouring knoll to report the enemy's movements. He shouted out to us that they were going away. We had a short consultation as to whether we should proceed or not. Ali wished us to return to Deir. Of course I wished to proceed to Palmyra, and in this I was backed up by the judge, and the matter was settled. We made our camels get up, and again took the beaten track.

We found in the place where the Bedaween had been stopping when we first caught sight of them a broken lance lying on the ground. Ali explained the circumstance by saying that there must have been a quarrel between two of the Bedaween as to whether we should be attacked, and that one had run at the other with his spear, that had been broken by the onlookers to prevent bloodshed. There were

were marks of fires all round, showing that the number must have been considerable. We presently caught sight of the party going over a hill about a mile off. With my field-glass I was able to make out that there were nine men on foot armed with guns and short spears, seven horsemen, and six camels, with about the same number of men. All were armed with lances, and most of them had guns. They were going tolerably straight to the Euphrates, which was now to our right, to cross to their own territory.

Though it was three hours before sunset, we stopped where we found plenty of fodder for the camels, as they were beginning to get very lean, and the desert was reported bare of food near Palmyra. The sun had set, twilight was coming on, and we had just brought in the camels, when we saw on the pathway by which we had come the heads of a large crowd that was coming towards us. I eagerly looked through my glasses, and could make out from their movement that they were unmounted. We began to get our things together to resist an attack. As they came nearer we found they were only armed for defence, for they had no guns. They turned out simply to be a party of thirty villagers from Deir egg-gathering in the desert. I had noticed during the day enormous flocks of a species of plover, and had several times discovered eggs lying on the ground just under my camel's feet. The birds were so tame they allowed us to come within a few yards of them, and had it not been that we were short of shot we could have killed any number of them. After we had exchanged greetings with the caravan they passed and disappeared into the night.

There

There was again another excitement in store before leaving the spot. A quarrel took place between Kalîl, the judge's servant, and Milhem, my own. High words passed between them, but I did not understand their meaning till I saw Kalîl seize a gun and threaten to shoot Milhem. The latter caught up a bludgeon and rushed upon his opponent. Both the judge and myself at once joined in to separate them. I succeeded in wrenching the gun out of Kalîl's hand, and he immediately caught hold of Milhem's bludgeon. I threw down the gun and seized the bludgeon also, and commanded them both to leave go. They reluctantly did so, and I led Milhem away. Kalîl's attention was then luckily diverted by the judge, for at the moment of coming up the latter had received a blow on the nose, and it was now bleeding profusely. This had accounted for the fact, which had rather surprised me at first, that he had taken no part as peacemaker in the scrimmage, for he was attending to his nose. He was a very gentle man and timid.

The camels were so much refreshed by the succulent food they had found that we made a run of at least six hours in the moonlight, and only stopped because Ali had again lost his way. I found the path next morning without difficulty, in a diametrically opposite direction from that in which my guide was going to seek for it.

We had by this time fallen into a regular routine of travel. We rose as soon as it was dawn, and had the camels packed, and were off by sunrise. We made from two to three hours' running, according to the state of the herbage in the desert, before we halted. As we never did

did so unless good food was found, it was sometimes considerably more (on one occasion eight hours), yet generally there was no difficulty in finding some green *waddy* to stop at after the first-mentioned time. We took our breakfast off coffee, dates, and bread, allowing the camels to feed meanwhile for an hour. They were then brought in, and were made to rest for half-an-hour, whilst the dishes, &c., were washed up and the smokers took a morning narghileh. The animals were reloaded, and we went straight on through all the heat of the day, as it had become so great that stopping without shelter was intolerable. If we found a verdant spot within two or three hours before sunset, we halted again and made our supper, our only other meal. This consisted always of soup made with karwamah as stock, rice, onions, and a little flour to thicken it, altogether a most delicious mess for a hungry man. Dates came after, and then coffee. Bread we always had to any amount, as we made it at the beginning of the meal. The baking was very simple. A large, thin, wrought-iron dish was placed with the curved part uppermost over a fire. The dough was made of flour and water with a pinch of salt. A small portion of the dough was beaten out on a board by the flat of the hand into a cake about six inches in diameter and half an inch thick. The cook then took it between his two hands and whirled it round and round like a wheel, a little tilted to one side. It soon got so thin that it could not be held on one hand without folding over like a handkerchief, so it had to be thrown, still turning, on to the iron dish, or girdle, where it became completely baked by the time the next

next piece was ready. This took about two minutes. The cake of unleavened bread when finished was about a foot in diameter and little more than $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch thick, and so tough that it could be used to wrap up anything in. The Bedaween themselves made their bread in a totally different manner. The fire at which the coffee had been boiled was raked on one side, and a round, shallow hole dug in the hot earth. The dough, in a mass about an inch thick, was put in, and the hot embers raked over. By the time they were cold the bread was sufficiently tough to be taken out of the hole, and the black charcoal beaten off without its breaking. It was cut into pieces and thrown into a pot containing boiling cooking butter, and almost immediately taken out. Though still quite tough and soft it was considered ready for eating. When there was no butter the Arabs ate the dough straight from the hole, and would not be persuaded to eat our bread, as they declared it was not sufficiently satisfying.

After the camels had grazed about two hours they were brought in and made to rest about an hour before we started on the night march. This lasted from three to six hours, according to the state of the moon, the condition of the camels, or the difficulties of the road. In this way we got a good deal of travelling done each twenty-four hours. The time between rising to start in the morning and stopping to rest varied between eighteen and twenty-one hours, though the time spent in actual travel was from thirteen to sixteen hours, showing that we lost about five hours during the day.

The etching forming the frontispiece to this volume shows

shows our party travelling at night. The guide leads. Behind him to the right is myself, followed by my servant. Almost behind the head of the guide's camel is the judge with Monsour on the same camel behind him, and further on again is his servant Kalîl. My camel-man is on foot beside the guide, and the judge's man is behind rather in the distance.

CHAP. VII.

Oasis in the Desert.

THE weather had now set in steadily hot, and the muddy water we had taken from the Euphrates at Deir began to smell so strongly even through the skins, that it became quite necessary to have those on my camel removed to one of the others. It was a great relief when Ali informed us that a hill visible on the horizon indicated the site of Sachne, an oasis with fine springs. He was not very encouraging as to the quality of the water, which he said was very salt and rather hot.

All along our route we had noticed traces of the journey of the robbers we had encountered, who had been in such rapid flight from their enemies that three camels and two horses had died on the road. Once, on rounding a knoll, we came suddenly upon one of their dead horses lying on its side, and covered with vultures. At our appearance they flew up in a body, leaving the horse white and glistening in the sun. The camels were so alarmed at this apparition that they swerved on one side, and tried to run away. The judge's camel, the ugliest and naughtiest of the lot, went off at a sharp trot in the opposite direction, throwing him a foot up in the air at every step. Old Monsour

Monsour was perched behind him, and we were all in fits of laughter at seeing them going away into the distance, "showing the daylight" at every jerk. As soon as he could get his breath the old judge told Monsour, who was holding on for his life, to jump down and stop the camel. As he did not do it at once, the judge began leathering him with his camel-stick, Monsour avoiding each stroke by nimbly jumping from side to side. The play was continued till the camel stopped of his own accord. The judge then dismounted, declaring that he would never again ride a camel. He marched for two or three hours under the burning sun, till at last his resolution broke down, and he mounted again with a very wry face.

Sachne, a village of about fifty houses, lies in a hollow, with a precipitous hill on the north side, which reflects the scorching rays of the mid-day sun on to the village. Five springs start out of the ground at the foot of the hill. One is so hot that steam rose from its surface; the others are cooler, and the furthest is almost the temperature of the air. The five streams flowed towards a sickly green patch of standing corn, amid which are a few scant olive and carrob trees. The water is charged with sulphuretted hydrogen, which we could smell some distance from the springs, besides being thick and oily with soda or some kindred alkali. It also sends down a black mud, which smells abominably. As this is the only water supply to the village, the inhabitants are not aware that it is bad; but the sickly pallor of their complexions shows that it is not very good for the health. It was scarcely a change for the better from our own bad water;

water; but it was not so muddy, and perhaps more wholesome. We filled all the skins, as Ali gave us the cheering intelligence that the next oasis we should come across on the following day had even worse water.

I had now been quite dis-illusioned. All former ideas of an oasis—the rich patch of luxuriant vegetation throwing a delicious shade under which the wearied and scorched traveller could rest himself—had been blown to the winds by the reality of Sachne. I looked forward quite resignedly to the worse water and even more squalid vegetation Ali promised us at the next springs. In this he proved to be mistaken, for the water was cool and fresh, only leaving a slightly acid taste that was rather pleasant than otherwise. The place was far greener, and the village of about a dozen houses called Ricca, though smaller, was better built than Sachne. It was well situated for defence on a slight hill, and completely surrounded by a high mud wall 12 or 15 feet high, kept in good preservation. These precautions are very necessary, for the village is near the quarters of the dreaded Anezieh, who would soon have found out any weak point in the defences. There was but one gate, looking towards the side where the land was cultivated. The patch was about the same size, viz. five acres, as at Sachne, for the supply of water in the two springs was quite as great as in the other five. The water bubbled up from the middle of two basins from the side of a gentle slope, and flowed down in a clear stream to the gardens below. The earth was extremely rich, and the crops were heavy. The people were handsome, robust, and very communicative. We saw about twenty or thirty camels

camels — a considerable number for the small village. They were all black and hideously ugly, very different from those we had been used to seeing at Baghdad. They were splendidly fat, and made our poor animals look doubly lean.

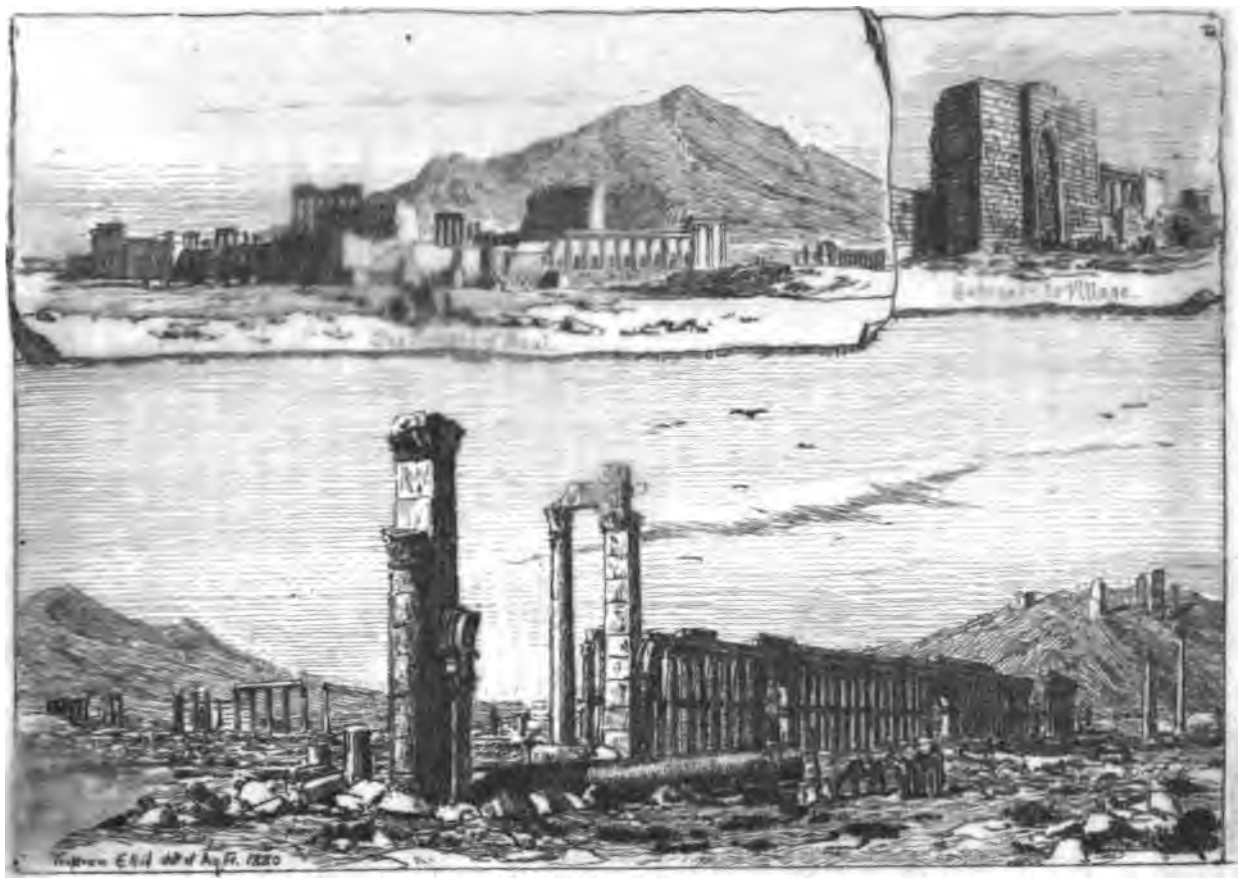
For the past day and a half there had been very little food for the camels, so we intended stopping some time at a little green waddy not more than an hour off. As I was wandering, looking at the flowers that were very thick and fine here, I came across the marks of many horses and men that seemed to indicate some surprise or disturbance of a party. A lot of fuel, also, had been left unconsumed in a heap. I showed these to Ali, and he looked very grave. "They are recent marks, and indicate that Bedaween are near," he said. "This party must have been surprised, or they would never have left their fuel unburnt." Orders were given, and we packed the camels and started at once for Palmyra, then only five hours off.

The ground had been hilly since we left Sachne, but now we came upon a vast plain. To the left, where it touched the horizon, it was covered with salt, looking like mirage. On the opposite edge rose a series of high hills, and at their base a long low building resembling a cathedral. This was Palmyra, known to the Bedaween as Tadmor—the very name mentioned in the Bible as the city Solomon built in the wilderness. The change from the mountain air to that of the hot, low-lying plain was so great that we made very slow progress. The tired camels could scarcely move. For three hours we plodded on, Palmyra seeming the same size and always in front of us, when we came upon the ruins of an outlying temple. It

It measured about 120 feet by 60 feet. The bases of most of the columns were standing, and were about 15 inches in diameter. I was surprised to find no traces of, or even materials for, a cellum. Some three miles further on we came upon more ruins of columns and foundations, but so little was left that it was impossible to make out any plans.

What had appeared all along to be a cathedral now turned out to be an enormous temple raised on a platform above the plain. Some parts of the outer walls were higher than the rest, and this gave the appearance of low towers of a cathedral. Rows of columns standing without any walls near were on the right, trending off towards a hill on which were a number of square towers, and further to the right again was a huge castle or fort, upon a perfectly conical *tel.* We had seen all these at a distance, but had not been able to make out before what they were. When near I sat down to make a sketch, leaving the others to proceed to pitch our camp among the ruins. Abdallah alone remained with me to carry my things and keep watch. I had not been working an hour before the sun set amid a bank of clouds, and it became so rapidly dark that had it not been for the cooking fires I should have had the greatest difficulty in finding my way to our camp.

Ali desired very much that we should sleep inside the village, as he said that a caravan which had encamped among the ruins the year before had been attacked and one of the party killed. But I feared the domestic Bedawee louse more than robbers, so I ordered the camp to be made outside the great temple, and Ali, Milhem, and myself kept watch during the night.



CHAP. VIII.

Palmyra.

IVIDING the night into three watches of two hours and a half each, I chose the midnight one for myself. It was beautiful weather, and I amused myself by making circles round and round our camp in order to examine the ruins, that surpassed in extent and magnificence anything that I had anticipated. Of course I could make out very little of the plan of the place, but the great temple, whose outer walls formed the fortifications to the Bedawee village within, was shining in the bright moonlight close beside us. One little black dot in the centre of the wall indicated the narrow and only entrance to the village. Just opposite to it, a hundred yards away, was a large square khan made of the drums of ruined columns, where some Turkish soldiers were picketed. It was Midhat Pacha, the Governor of Syria, who first had them placed there to protect the villagers. Since then, the village, which had before been almost deserted on account of the raids of the Anezeih, had become most thriving, and every house was inhabited. I walked down the celebrated Street of Columns, barred across with black shadows from the brilliant moon that flashed between the pillars as I passed.

 I could

I could not, unfortunately, go as far as I wished, for it was necessary to keep the camp always within sight, but I had seen enough to show me I had chosen rightly to bivouac within the ruins outside the village, and so not to miss this very beautiful scene.

As next morning the sun rose, clear and hot, from the horizon, the old Sheikh (or Mudir) came to see us. He was very jolly, and the only fat Bedawee I have ever seen. He was very like a friar of the olden time, and his simple dress with a hooded abba still further carried out the idea. He expressed his sorrow that "the great English Consul" (myself) had not spent the night in his house, and hoped I would do so the following evening. The commandant of the soldiers then came up, and many other of the principal men of the village with him, so we all had coffee amicably together. They expressed surprise that we had not met any of the Anezeih encamped a few hours off on our very road, and from their description we gathered that at the very time I found the marks of a struggle when we stopped to give the camels fodder only a small hill could have divided us from them. Theirs was a large encampment with seven sheiks, and must have been the very one robbed by the Shammur we had encountered near Deir. After some hours' sketching, the judge and I made a little excursion into the village. The present entrance is of Saracenic construction, the real door of the temple being visible within. It is about 30 feet high and about 12 feet wide, the jambs being made of a single stone. Several inscriptions are cut on the lintel, evidently of a much later date than the masonry. The main street of the village is very narrow, and

and leads straight up to an inner temple that stands high above the houses in the centre. We found the interior fitted as a khan, though tenantless. The carving everywhere was very beautiful. In one place a niche about 12 feet square was covered by a single slab of stone with a most elaborate geometrical pattern engraved upon it. A staircase built in the thickness of the wall led to the top of the now roofless inner temple, and from there we could gain a very accurate idea of the great temple and the town of Palmyra. That on which we were standing had formerly been surrounded by a peristyle (now mostly fallen) of fluted columns, 65 feet high, with bronze capital and bases, and raised some 15 feet above the surrounding ground. The entrance was towards the south-west, and there was a doorway in the peristyle as well as in the cellum, which is pierced with windows. They were both very richly carved. Cut on the soffit of the former was a cluster of fruit representing grapes, pine-apples, figs, apples, and pears, all evidently copied from nature, and but very slightly idealised. I noticed that the joints of the stonework to the cellum had been cut into large holes at the corners of the stones, the entire thickness of the wall being often pierced through. This, as at Baalbec, has been done by the Arabs to obtain the lead surrounding the copper cramps. The lead was used for bullets and the copper cramps were valuable for sale.

The village consisted of about two hundred houses, constructed out of the old material of the temple, cemented together with mud. Pieces of columns and fragments of beautiful carving appeared everywhere on the outside

 surfaces,

surfaces, and even on the pavement of the streets. The outer walls of the great temple had been roughly repaired where ruined, and at one time were used as a fortification by the Turks, and probably even by the Saracens before them. There were remains of a double row of Corinthian columns inside. They were each provided with a bracket, sticking out of the side a little more than half-way up the shaft. These brackets pointed towards each other in the double row. Only about twenty of the columns were standing complete, but there were many broken portions still remaining in place, and doubtless if the wretched village could be removed the whole plan of this magnificent temple could be discovered. The exterior of the walls is ornamented with pilasters of the Doric order, with false windows between each. The whole stands upon an artificial foundation of Cyclopean masonry, formed of huge blocks some 6 feet square and 10 feet long, rough on the outside, but beautifully bedded. These are evidently of much higher antiquity than the Roman work above, and may actually have been placed there by Solomon. On each side are ruins of walls intersecting each other at different heights. They are far too ruined for their complicated plan to be made out. At about three hundred yards from the great temple commences the city proper, with a gate of three openings. The centre gate leads straight into the Street of Columns, a mile and a quarter long. Streets cross it at frequent intervals, all provided with a double row of columns. There are several small temples scattered about the town. From our vantage ground it was a little difficult to make out this plan, the whole space covered by the city being

being scattered over with columns fallen and half-fallen, capitals, cornices, and architraves in heaps. The gardens belonging to the village lay towards the south in a slight depression, watered by a copious spring from the foot of the hill where the towers stood. In the general white glare of the plain the foliage appeared almost black, with here and there a bright spot where the irrigating water glittered in the sun. Among the carob and other fruit trees there were some dozen small palms of rather a sickly appearance, but enough to keep up the old tradition that gave the name of Palmyra to the city of Zenobia. With the aid of field-glasses I was able to see that the castle on the hill was a very large and perfect specimen of Saracenic architecture.

While we were making an examination of the carvings, &c., some of the inhabitants brought us coins and other curios, and one even staggered under the large fragment of a bust that had been brought from the tombs. It was a female head, and the features resembled closely those of a modern Damascus woman of the present day, though the drapery on the shoulders was classic. I have since seen many others; they none of them have a Roman type, and the workmanship is very poor compared to that of the architecture of Palmyra. All the busts are cut off horizontally a little below the shoulder, after the manner of the early German sculpture. As far as I was able to learn, no full-length, life-sized statues have been found, nor even fragments of them. Almost everything is below life-size.

The general style of the architecture is Corinthian, with the exception of one row of Ionic columns. The manner is very florid, yet the proportions are remarkably just and elegant.

elegant. The carving of the volutes of the capitals is as perfect as anything could be, and they are so deeply undercut that a thin stick can easily be passed through behind them.

The building material throughout is limestone from the neighbouring hills, with the exception of a few grey granite columns, which must have been brought from an immense distance. Four of them are used for ornaments at the intersection of the two principal streets, and are monoliths 40 feet high. These columns are not provided with brackets, but all the rest in the Street of Columns have them on one side rather more than half-way up the shaft, placed facing each other the whole way down. Their exact use is a matter of conjecture, for we have no real clue to it. Most travellers have given it as their opinion that they were intended to support statues or busts of celebrated men. If this were so, it is strange that no fragment of statue or bust has been found near them. They are too narrow to support anything except the smallest statuette, even cut off in the Palmyrene manner. I consider them to be exclusively utilitarian, for we do not find them in any place where ornamentation has been specially studied.

Perhaps we shall arrive at a fair conclusion of their use by some considerations of the position of Palmyra, lying as it does in the desert half-way between Damascus and Zelebi, on the Euphrates. Both these towns were on the great caravan route between Persia and Syria. Palmyra was the only locality where sufficient water was found in the desert to support a large population. Zelebi, of course, drew its supply

supply from the Euphrates, and was also close to Persia. It would appear, then, that Palmyra would form a remarkably convenient place of meeting for caravans travelling from Persia and those coming from Damascus, and it is very likely that the goods were exchanged here, instead of either of the caravans proceeding the whole distance. The great importance and the enormous riches of Palmyra would thus be accounted for, in spite of its isolated position.

For the purposes of rapid exchange, the bazaars would have to be very extensive. The shops, if there were any, would only be occupied at stated times, so it would be scarcely worth while to make them permanent constructions. Indeed it is probable that they were simply made out of the tents belonging to the various caravans. The streets with columns indicate the position of the bazaars. The order was useful as well as ornamental, for on the top of the architrave is a distinctly-marked water-course that is continuous along the main street, a mile and a quarter in length. The supply was not drawn from the sulphurous spring below, but from a sweet spring in a neighbouring hill, and the aqueduct can still be traced the whole way.

The most striking fact is the absence of stones that could have been used for building walls, the bases of the columns being generally visible. This has been accounted for by many who have supposed that they were constructed of mud or sun-dried bricks that have since been destroyed by the weather. This is impossible, as they must have left some trace on the sandy soil of the desert. In the far older towns

towns of Assyria and Babylon, where sun-dried bricks have been used, the mounds that mark the sites contain plenty of the old material in an almost unaltered condition. One is, therefore, obliged to suppose that the town was built with but a small amount of masonry, in other words, that most of the houses near the columns must have been temporary. Under these circumstances, these brackets would be useful to support horizontal wooden beams used for the construction of the roof of the temporary shops on each side of the bazaars. I have been informed by a friend who has been in the Hauran, where there are classical ruins of a somewhat later date, that similar brackets appear on the columns there. In that district basalt is the only building material that has been used, doors and window-shutters being made of it, for the country is treeless, and there is no wood. Between the brackets of the columns there are still some basaltic beams left, and, in consequence, he had arrived at the same conclusion respecting those columns at the Hauran as I had done with those at Palmyra.

Most of the stone has been carelessly chosen as regards the strata; the weathering shows it tilted in all directions in the drums of the columns. The cracks so formed give somewhat the appearance of marble, and this, together with the bleaching of the fragments on the ground by the rain and sun, may have been the cause of the mistake of the early writers on Palmyra, who all say that it is built of marble.

The disintegration of the stone has caused a great deal of sand to accumulate on its surface, and nothing will grow there

there that the camels can eat, though there are plenty of patches of green weeds between the stones. The poor beasts, who had found scarcely anything to eat the day before in the desert, were suffering very much from hunger, so I determined to push on at once.

We started just before mid-day, a very inconvenient time, for Palmyra was the hottest place we had as yet found in the desert, and even the natives were so overcome that they had all disappeared, and we seemed to be the only living things in the place. We made first for the great spring that irrigates the gardens, in order to re-fill our skins. Though the water contains much sulphuretted hydrogen in solution, yet it is perfectly pure otherwise, and in about six hours entirely loses its unpleasant smell and taste. From here we passed up the hill where the towers are situated, and, passing through a narrow defile, came into a depression crowded with more towers. This was the great cemetery of the town, and in these towers were placed the mummified corpses of the former inhabitants of Palmyra. At present they are tenantless, as the Arabs have rifled them. The size, architectural beauty, and number of these mausoleums render this if not the finest at least the most impressive part of Palmyra.

It was not long before a small and succulent bush appeared on the surface of the ground that I had not noticed before. It was like a young tamarisk, and the camels devoured it eagerly. In every direction also the caper plant crawled over the ground that had now almost lost its sandy character.

During the afternoon we came up with a caravan of about two

two hundred camels and many people on foot, who had come all the way from Baghdad by the same route as ourselves. They had their tents pitched, as they were remaining where we saw them for a day to allow their animals to eat. They had started three weeks before us from Baghdad, and had gone thus slowly in order to arrive in Damascus with their animals in good condition, so as to sell them at a profit.

Two young Bedaween came out to meet us whilst we were still at a distance. They were two sons of old Monsour, and had recognised his camels from afar. Monsour very much wished us to stop for the rest of the evening with the caravan; but I saw through my field-glasses that they were a very squalid and uninteresting lot, so I determined to push straight on. We passed near them, and had many visitors, who walked with us for a short distance for the pleasure of our company. Amongst them was an extraordinary creature in the European costume without a coat or waistcoat. His shirt was bright yellow, his braces scarlet and of English manufacture. He had deep red cotton trousers, and a long blue necktie, without a collar. His head was bare, but his hair was long, and so matted that it formed an effectual shield against the sun. This man looked like an apparition, dancing about in front of my camel in a way that would have frightened any horse out of his wits, but had no visible effect on the camel. I asked who he was, and was told he was "only the madman of the caravan," as if it were quite usual for caravans to have such adjuncts. After less than an hour all our friends, including the madman, had left us, and shortly after, on looking round,

round, I could only see a grey line of camels feeding in the desert, and a flock of sheep that had joined the caravan at the Euphrates in order to accompany it to Damascus.

The moon was now one day after the full, and very brilliant, so we made rapid progress that night. The next morning we saw behind us what we at first took for a tribe of Arabs, but I found on looking through my (always so useful) glasses that they were simply the caravan that had been following us the whole night. They had come to within four miles of us, and were then pitching their tents for the day.

Four hours' travelling brought us to the ruins of a fortified Roman tower, and the remains of a long aqueduct leading to an old well close by, with a mound on which stood the jambs of a highly-ornamented temple doorway. Under the shadow of the tower I took my breakfast, for the sun was already getting too hot to allow of sitting in the open. My Bedaween, nevertheless, chose to light their fire, cook their coffee, and take it in the full blaze of both sun and fire, warming their hands meanwhile at the latter as they smoked. It seems the Bedaween have got so much into the habit of warming their hands at the fire when lit in the evenings, that they seldom omit to do it under all circumstances.

Just before we left our resting-place we espied a party of four men and three camels making directly towards us, for the tower is used as one of the landmarks to show the road. As soon as we came out of its shelter they saw us, and being the smaller party made a long *détour* to avoid us. Again, when we were halting for dinner, five horsemen fully armed came within a mile of us. Directly they saw us they disappeared

appeared down a little waddy or depression. The next thing we saw of them was two miles on the other side of us in our rear, as they had taken advantage of the slight hollows to pass us unperceived.

At midnight we passed by the village of Kurietain, observing at the same time the greatest quiet and strictest silence, as the men of the village bear a bad night reputation. We were unfortunately obliged to come near it in order to replenish our exhausted water-skins. Only those who have been obliged to drink the saline water of the desert can understand the immense pleasure there is in coming across pure and good water like that of Kurietain. We scarcely knew when to stop drinking, it was so beautifully transparent and deliciously cold.

The road here began to rise rapidly, and when out of sight of the village we stopped to take our rest in a little [illegible] for the [illegible] or beasts were almost dead-beat.

[illegible] were astir well before sunrise, for it had [illegible] cold on account of the altitude that [illegible] sleep. The road continued still to rise, and [illegible] the sun appeared we were so high that a slight [illegible] frost formed on the hills close by. It had been so [illegible] even seen dew, that this cold seemed to [illegible] very bones. Our spirits sank to a low [illegible] and [illegible] again till we had descended into a warm dell, full of luxuriant vegetation and abundance of flowers. While the camels were enjoying their repast, we saw a large party of villagers coming on foot from Djerud. They told us that the country was now entirely free from Bedaween, and the road perfectly safe to Damascus. This news,

[illegible] water at [illegible]

news, though very cheering, had at once the effect of making my companions dilatory, for in their eyes the only possible reason for hurrying would be that danger was near. It required the exercise of all my authority, backed up by that of the judge, to get them to travel at the same pace as heretofore. The whole day we travelled over a perfectly level plain, lying between two ranges of hills. The ground was green with young tamarisks, there were many cultivated fields at intervals, and the ruined remains of many villages, probably antique. We were, in fact, out of the desert, and from that time were never without seeing signs of man's habitation.

That night we got into Djerud by the moonlight. Ali intended to pass through the village as being the shortest way; but the streets consist of a maze of narrow lanes, and after wandering about for half-an-hour in this big village we completely lost our way amongst the gardens. Every inhabitant had gone to bed, and had it not been for the multitude of cats that wandered and dogs that prowled about in all directions, one would have thought the village deserted. The walls, of a pale mud, gleamed so white, and the shadows were so black, that the camels were continually starting most unpleasantly. We passed through one lane that was full of skeletons of camels, amongst which were numerous dogs gnawing at those parts where a small amount of flesh remained. I never saw anything more ghastly. We finally emerged from the village, very far from where we had intended, and before long lay down to rest quite done up.

The next morning I had to kick up my followers to get them awake, for the sun had already risen; and even then they were so slow in their movements that I had to shame Ali into

into quickness by starting to load one of the camels myself. They all thought I must be extremely angry and hastened to put me in a good humour by their energy. We soon came upon a well-made carriage road. Such a startling phenomenon could only be accounted for by our being very near Damascus, and a sudden turn in the road brought us to an opening of the hills through which we saw this oldest city in the world.

By mid-day we had got into the great oasis, in the middle of which stands Damascus. At the outskirts runs a stream called the Little Barada, where we stopped to give the animals a rest, and took a bathe ourselves. We then sauntered through miles of gardens, crossing water-courses at every turn, and hailed by the villagers working in the fields under the thick shadow of the fruit-trees. I could well understand the enthusiasm of the Arabs about the beauty of Damascus, for these gardens, always rich and luxuriant in the spring-time, seemed an unmitigated paradise after the desert. An hour passed very quickly. We went through a gateway, and the arched portico of an old mosque, into an open space. Opposite was the ancient wall of Damascus, and our road turned to the left and skirted the exterior. We presently passed the leper village, said to be the house of Naaman, and came almost immediately upon Bab Sharki, the gate at the end of the street called "Straight." In ten minutes more I had descended at the house door of my friend Mr. Jago, the vice-consul of Damascus, on the twenty-second day after leaving Baghdad. The total distance including the ground covered before the real start was 750 miles.

CHAP. IX.

Damascus.

REAT confusion reigned in the city of Damascus at the moment of my arrival. A well-known Christian doctor had poisoned his wife with prussic acid. There was no doubt about the facts, for she had taken the poison, masked by castor oil, in presence of a witness, and had died almost instantly. The authorities, who had doubtless been fee'd by the culprit, at once took up the case in a way to defeat completely the ends of justice. They began by locking up the house, after giving the doctor sufficient time to remove any suspicious traces. Nothing more would have been done if the relations of the deceased had not been connected with the English Consulate, and through the exertions of Mr. Jago a post-mortem examination was ordered. This was the talk and wonder of the town, for it was the first time it had ever been heard of in Damascus. But here a hitch occurred. The military doctors who were to make it would not do it without being paid extra for it in advance, as it was not military duty. Now the Government would not pay, nor would the deceased's friends. The matter was, however, arranged by Mr. Jago, and the post-mortem came off, but so many days late that strong enough traces

traces were not found for the doctors to give positive evidence on the subject. They could not agree upon a report, and the result was the prisoner escaped. This affair gives a very characteristic phase of Eastern justice, even when European influence is brought to bear in the strongest manner.

Damascus is a town that seems to run with water. Every house is provided with two or more fountains in the courtyards. In the better class of houses there are five or six. The bazaars have got drinking troughs at nearly every corner, and at frequent intervals one comes on a "parting of the waters." This is where the current is turned on to various sets of pipes from the main aqueduct. Each pipe communicating with different groups of houses only receives water for a certain number of hours during the day. Each house, besides having a supply pipe, has a waste pipe. The fountains of each dwelling are placed at different levels; the water supplied to the highest goes through all the rest, and finally into the waste pipe communicating with a complete system of drains. The whole ground is one network of underground conduits that have existed from an unknown period. They are entirely made of masonry or earthenware, and they are consequently always leaking, and the roads more or less up for repairs.

It is very curious to see the river Barada run into one end of Damascus, a swift stream about 100 feet broad and 3 feet deep, and then disappear under an arch. It cannot be traced anywhere in the town as it is entirely consumed in the fountains. At the other end of Damascus all the drains converge, making a muddy river which is completely used up,

up, except in flood-time, by irrigating the surrounding land. The gardens of Damascus include orchards, vineyards, and fields of roses, grain, &c., but scarcely any flowers for ornamental purposes. The last must be sought for only in the courts and private houses, where they are plentiful.

Near the town there are several public gardens, so-called, kept by the owners of restaurants. Here on Sunday afternoon may be seen under the shade of trees all the native fashion and beauty of Damascus, who sit and drink *eau sucrée* iced with the snow of Mount Hermon, listening to the sounds of running streams, and occasionally to the less musical strains of an Arab band.

Of course Mussulman ladies never show their faces there, but many Turks come to see the crowd of Christian and Jewish women, who here remove their veils. The younger Jewish girls are often extremely pretty, but that soon fades, and married women are always disfigured by the custom of shaving their heads and eyebrows. They of course wear a wig, but native made and such as would not deceive even a child, while the space where the eyebrows were is painted with a thin black line.

Like most Eastern cities Damascus is divided into quarters, separated from each other by walls with gates that are always closed at night. The Christian quarter is conspicuous for its good houses and general cleanly appearance. The Jewish quarter is the most dirty and squalid, yet the interiors of some of the houses are most splendid. The inhabitants seem to vie with each other as to how much they can spend over their ornamentation. In one small room in the Jew Stambouli's house, five thousand pounds was

 spent

spent over the decoration. To the educated eye all this ornament is utterly debased; it is a perfect jumble of styles without any ruling principle in the design. The only house that I saw in tolerable taste was that of our Consul. It had been built and decorated about eighty years ago, before European innovation. Like all buildings in the East it was a mixture of squalor and beauty. Fine inlaid marble work on the walls is surmounted by poorly painted patterns.

The history of the house accounts for its richness. During the Egyptian occupation the Arab owner made great friends with the governing Pacha, who used, though a Mahometan, to come and drink secretly at his house. When drunk, the Pacha became good-natured, and his host was able to ask him many favours with success. The guilds of the different trades used to seek the Arab's support against the impositions of Government officials. To repay him, each guild decorated his house to the best of their ability.

The main bazaars of the town are of course the principal streets. Numerous small courts, alleys, and passages lead off them, and being roofed from other bazaars, the whole is so intricate that only an old inhabitant can find his way about them. Each trade has its own particular locality, and frequently its own particular smell. The bootmakers' bazaar can be distinguished from afar by its powerful odour. The book bazaar is musty, and the carpenters' bazaar has a delightful freshness from the newly-cut wood. As I passed a low door in the "general" bazaar, for all manner of cotton goods, &c., I became aware of a delicious fragrance coming therefrom. On looking in I saw the stalls on each side

side of the bazaars completely covered with rose-leaves, reaching nearly to the roofs of the little stalls and leaving only a narrow passage in the middle. These were for the manufacture of attar of roses, and they have precisely that smell, very unlike the scent of English garden roses. Attar is made by immersing the leaves, which are small and waxy, in warm water, and then allowing it to evaporate till small globules of oil appear. These are carefully collected and form the attar.

The bazaars are justly celebrated among the Arabs. Though more picturesque than those of Baghdad, they are not so well built, nor are they so picturesque as those of Cairo; but they are better stocked and more extensive than any others in the East.

The continuation of the street that is called "Straight" is one of the principal bazaars, and the ever active Midhat Pacha had determined to make it the most important one, so a large space had already been cleared of houses for the purpose. An extensive fire had lately destroyed a large portion of the old bazaar, and it was rebuilt to a much greater width, with a roof like that of a station. The Damascenes were very proud of their new bazaar, though its intense ugliness would be no attraction to visitors.

Mosques and praying-places are met with frequently. They are of all sizes, from a mere cell to the Great Mosque, the largest in the East, and this is only part of what was formerly a Roman Basilica. Traces of the entire building extend for many yards beyond its eastern side. The tomb of Saladin and several other tombs also lie within its former outer walls. One of the most remarkable mosque

 exteriors

exteriors is the [illegible] of the entrance to the Midân. It has a [illegible] entirely covered with tiles, green banded with [illegible] forms a picturesque finish to the basket-maker's [illegible] as seen from the Midân, and it is this point [illegible] has been chosen for the etching. The same [illegible] continued past the minaret widens out and forms a sort of *place*, with several large aspen and plane trees. They have been used for ages past as the gallows for hanging criminals. Of all mosques of Damascus the one first seen from the coach road, lying to the right, is artistically the most beautiful. Its two white and graceful minarets are backed by a mass of dark foliage, and the walls of its court, surmounted by numerous small domes, spread right and left for several hundred feet. It is called the Tekiah Mosque, and as there is a right of way through [illegible] easy for the traveller to see. Inside [illegible] more beautiful than outside. There [illegible] in the middle and many trees round it. [illegible] itself is built of different coloured marble [illegible] polished, but now, alas! falling into decay. The [illegible] repairing [illegible] is already in holes, admitting the rain [illegible] front and allowing it to trickle over the [illegible] work of the walls. Before long the w[illegible]

The khans [illegible] and splendid, and were formerly intended to accommodate the great caravans from the East. Since the opening of the Suez Canal these caravans have almost ceased coming, but the khans are nearly always full on account of the great mule and camel traffic between Damascus and the neighbouring country of the Hauran

The Minaret, Damascus.

Hauran on the south, or the districts of Homs and Hammah on the north, and Beyrout to the west. For there is nearly as much mule traffic to the sea-coast as formerly, in spite of the regularly organized system of luggage-carts run by the Beyrout and Damascus Road Company. The old road, winding in and out amongst the hills, is almost entirely used for the mule caravans. It is in parts extremely rough and precipitous, very bad for the mules, and longer than the new coach road; yet, on account of the small fee charged by the road company, the muleteers prefer to keep to the old track, though the animals are of course worn out quicker. Any day carcasses of poor animals that have died in harness may be seen by the wayside. In point of picturesqueness the old road has decidedly the advantage over the coach road.

On leaving Damascus it enters the village of Salahieh, and after leaving it winds up the hill behind it. Where it passes over a shoulder and disappears a tomb has been built, and from under the dome of this is obtained the celebrated and well-known view of Damascus. It is from here that the Great Mahomet saw the rich verdure of the oasis lying beneath his feet, with the town gleaming white among the dark foliage. "It is given unto man to enter Paradise but once," he said, and then passed on. It is doubtless a story to explain why Mahomet never visited Damascus, but it at the same time gives the high opinion that the Arabs have of the beauty of their town. The plan of Damascus is shaped somewhat like a tadpole, the long tail being the Midân, and the head having the great mosque as eye. The whole extent of the vast oasis can be seen,

seen, and the sudden edge where the desert begins on the other side is strongly marked. The Jebel Hauran rises blue to the south, and from it a continuous chain of hills runs on the east up to the spectator, and again continues towards the north, forming a vast amphitheatre. This appearance has caused Damascus to be described as lying in a hole, though it is 2,300 feet above the sea, and decidedly higher than the plain beyond. Close by, on the right, is a deep gorge with nearly vertical sides through which the Barada (the ancient Abamah) forces its way towards Damascus. On either side up to the vertical wall of rock poplar-trees are planted in the fertile soil. There is just room enough for the delightfully shady coach road to run first on one side and then on the other of the stream. As I had already twice traversed it, I determined, when going to Baalbec, to pass by a less frequented way, all the more because after leaving the valley of the Barada the scenery on that route becomes dull and wearisome.

By the advice of Mr. Jago, I settled to pass over the Anti-Lebanon, keeping along the Barada to its source. This not only took in the best scenery of the generally arid Anti-Lebanon, but made nearly a straight line to Baalbec.

I left Damascus on the 4th June, in the morning, with a much smaller following than the one with which I had entered it. My caravan consisted simply of myself and servant, each riding on a horse, and a man running alongside to take care of the animals at night. My luggage I had sent by muleteer before me to Beyrout.

We kept to the hot and dusty road for two or three miles, and when leaving it (where the river did) we took a bridle path

path that led round a spur of the Anti-Lebanon, and brought us to a gorge leading right down on the top of the village of Ein Figi. The river that we had again joined is here so confined, that the pathway has occasionally to be cut in the side of the rock in order to pass some of the bends. The gorge opens out at intervals, so as to form basins in which rich earth has accumulated. Here gardens have been made and cottages built, amid luxuriant foliage and productive fruit trees. The sun, reflected from the bare rocks above, made the temperature in these basins rise to a perfectly frightful heat, and were it not for the overhanging trees travelling in the daytime would be almost impossible.

By about mid-day we had arrived at the great spring generally known as the "Head of the Waters." It supplies two-thirds of the total body of the Barada. For some time before we had heard a noise resembling distant artillery, and now we came up to where the water rushes out of a huge hole at the base of a precipice. It forms at once a stream 30 feet wide and 3 feet deep, with a current so rapid that no horse can stand in it. The cave is hidden by trees, and I should have passed it without seeing it if the noise had not attracted me to the place. There are the foundations of an ancient Roman building, with three arches built of huge stones, placed directly in the mouth of the cave. The natives say that the volume of the water never varies, however dry the season may be; and though this is not strictly true, the quantity is always sufficient for the supply of Damascus, even when it forms the sole source of water in the river.

Above

Above this the Barada becomes a very insignificant stream, nearly dry in summer and autumn, though the scenery remains still grand and rugged. Only a few years ago it was considered a dangerous road on account of the many villages dotting the sides of the valley inhabited by the dreaded Metwalieh, but of late they have found so many solid advantages in European travellers passing their way that they have given up their habits of robbery. Though quiet, they are decidedly a surly race, and it would not be comfortable for travellers to stop in one of their villages. I made for the village of Zebidany, inhabited by Christians, where I intended sleeping.

Zebidany is the second highest village in the Anti-Lebanon. The country there is well wooded and picturesque. It is much thought of by the inhabitants, as it is the only very fertile spot on the generally high and dry Anti-Lebanon. Below the village lies a large level valley, known as the Plains of Zebidany. Cereals only are grown, and yield abundant harvests, which are consumed by the people of Damascus. The houses of Zebidany are very poor, and the night's lodging I obtained was decidedly rough, though the people were hospitable. On the hill stands Bludan, the highest village on the Anti-Lebanon. Some of the rich Damascenes have their country villas here, as the air is always fresh, even at midsummer. I found the night very chilly in Zebidany, though it is some 800 feet lower.

The next day we left the fertility of that region for barrenness and desolation. The track was so indistinct that we mised our way somewhat, and before long found ourselves at the edge of the B'kaa, the great central plain lying

lying between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. We skirted its eastern edge, passing through Metwalieh villages most of the day. We met two native travellers going in the opposite direction, each of them with two zaptiehs. This is a necessary precaution for them, as there is some danger, but for a European it is scarcely necessary. It was nearly sunset before Baalbec came suddenly into view close by us.

CHAP. X.

Baalbec.

OMING on them in this way, the traveller has a far more impressive view of the ruins than he can get on the usual road, where they are seen so far off that one gets heartily tired of them before arriving. I was comfortably put up at the little Arab hotel near the ruins, which is a much more comfortable place than the other old one kept by a Greek. At the former they receive you with good-natured effusion, making you feel more like a guest than a visitor at an hotel. While staying there I felt more comfortable than at any other hotel in Syria. The food was good and the cost small.

The extent of the ruins, though very great, seemed small after those at Palmyra. The style is the same, viz. Corinthian, but is richer. The stones used in the construction are also larger. The celebrated six standing columns of the largest temple are 10 feet higher than the largest at Palmyra, which are no larger than the columns of the smaller temple at Baalbec.

Frequent earthquakes have very much destroyed the ruins, even after having been mutilated by the Saracens and Turkish conquerors. There are indications everywhere

Monument at Rawalpindi

where that the place had been turned into a strong fort. Parapets had been added and loop-holes cut in the ancient walls, while in some places complete towers with internal chambers of the Saracenic style of architecture had been built above. From the top of one of these towers a view may be had of the most interesting portion of the ruins. It is, however, so near to the smaller temple that it is impossible to take a photograph, and even drawing it becomes troublesome. I have taken this view as the subject of the accompanying etching, at the time the afternoon sun began to make long shadows on the ground.

Baalbec has been so much described in guide-books that I shall not enter here into a very full account. The main part of the ruin consists of the large Temple of the Sun, of which six columns only are standing, and five others in the same row are lying on the ground, knocked down by the earthquake of 1822. Beside it is the smaller temple, and at a slightly lower level is the Temple of Jupiter. The greater portion of this is standing, and the complete plan can easily be made out. It forms the principal feature of the ruins, and, though there are signs of its never having been completed, it still remains the most richly decorated piece of Corinthian architecture in the world. The roof between the peristyle and cellum is slightly vaulted and covered with the richest carvings; bas-reliefs of heads and busts (probably portraits) are of frequent occurrence, but the faces have in all cases been utterly destroyed. As those remaining in position are 65 feet from the ground, and thus not to be reached by ordinary means, they must have been destroyed by the bullets

bullets of those true believers who were stationed there when the temple was a fort. They even still form tempting marks for a revolver, and it would be a good thing if the tourists confined their attention only to these, but the delicate volutes and acanthus leaves are frequently "brought down" by the same ruthless destroyers. This temple, like the other larger one, has signs of its never having been completed, though probably the main construction was finished. The necking moulding at the base of some of the capitals is left rough, and an ornamental string-course high up on the wall of the cellum is beautifully carved in places and left rough in others. A string-course, also, with a Greek key pattern low down on the cellum, is not completed on the north side. Any ruin on a smaller scale would have long since disappeared, as it has formed the quarry from which stones have been taken to build the town (of 6,000 inhabitants) of the same name, situated on the eastern side. Almost any day some native may be seen with donkeys or mules carting off the stone. Luckily the blocks in the finest parts are far too huge for "draughting," and it is too much trouble and expense to blast them.

At the base of every column may be seen a curious excavation in the stone reaching to its centre. These were made by the Arabs in times past, in order to obtain the lead and the copper cramps that bound the columns to their bases. The drums of the columns are so huge that these miners were unable to get up to the first joint, or many more would have been lying prostrate. The stones forming the architrave usually weigh about fifty tons each, and

and an examination of those on the ground show numbers of little holes close together at the back. These were doubtless used in hoisting the stones, and indicate that an immense number of ropes were used for the purpose, and therefore the stone was probably not rolled up an incline, as has been frequently supposed. The placing of these stones was certainly the most difficult part of the work of building. It was in its way even as great an undertaking as the placing of the great stones on the north and west sides of the temple platform, three of which make an aggregate length of 184 feet, with a depth of 14 feet. They weigh at least a thousand tons each, and are 20 feet from the ground; yet all the construction around is solid, and there would not be the same difficulty in getting a purchase, as in the case of the architrave.

Under these three monster stones there are some others of scarcely inferior weight, though they appear smaller, and along the north side are nine others more than half the size. These last have not been used (like the others) for forming the platform of the great temple, which is carried down some 20 feet within their line. The stones on this wall have not been all faced. A distinct line divides the finished from the unfinished work. This, together with the fact that there are no traces of a cellum, renders it pretty conclusive that the temple was never completed. The platform upon which the two temples stand is continued eastward, and a huge quadrangle is built on it. Its sides were designed with alternate square and semicircular niches of such large dimensions, that disengaged granite columns run along their front. In the middle of this

this stood another building, probably a basilica. A large door from this led into the centre of the east end of the great temple. The floor of the basilica must have been considerably lower than the bases of the temple columns, and it would be worth while to excavate further to ascertain whether the floor of the temple was sunk to the same level.

Beneath the greater part of this platform there are vaulted tunnels and underground cells. The arching is in all cases evidently Roman work, but the side walls are built of huge rough stones laid without mortar, and they seem to indicate that this part was built at a very much earlier date. There is another quadrangle, shaped in plan like a hexagon, next to the great quadrangle, and the great portico was east of the hexagon. The flight of steps leading from this place has so entirely disappeared, that it is doubtful if they have ever been built. Though the stones used in the platforms of both the hexagon and portico are rough and large like the rest, they must be of more modern construction, for carved stones of some former temple are mixed amongst them. In one case, at the side of the hexagon, a large piece of the architrave is visible from the outside, though not in a very noticeable position.

The group of buildings must have formed a magnificent whole, but, on account of their never having been completed, cannot have been so splendid as most people imagine. It is quite fruitless to "restore" that which was never finished, though it may be amusing to amateur architects.

The large mosque in the town of Baalbec, with, it is said, a hundred columns, is entirely built out of the old materials

materials of the temples. The columns vary in size according to the part from which they were taken. In most cases only single drums of the columns have been used, giving a very squat appearance. The capitals are placed on the columns without any attempt at a fit, but generally the smaller capitals are on the larger columns, and *vice versâ.* The mosque is only worth a visit on account of its size, and as showing details of the architecture of the temples.

It is well worth while to mount the hill to the south-east of the ruins. In going up, numerous fragments of columns and carved stones, together with foundations of buildings, are met with. The inference is that Baalbec was situated outside the temples in a similar way to Palmyra. The great spring that rises from the foot of the Anti-Lebanon was the cause of its existence. Its copious waters then, as now, irrigated a large oasis. At present there are an immense number of trees, fruit and poplar, that cluster round the ruins. It is this that makes the ruins of Baalbec so far more picturesque than those of Palmyra, and the water has the great advantage of being perfectly pure, untainted by any salts or noxious gases. Near the fountain-head a large mosque and caravansery have been built, and, though of very modern construction, is already in ruins.

The quarries from which the stone for building the temples has been excavated are close to them. They are entirely in the limestone rock, and in one of them still lies a huge undetached block of stone that measures 64 feet by 16 feet by 14 feet. It is larger than any of the stones used in the buildings, and it is only attached on its under side to

to the living rock by a narrow ledge, on which the marks of the picks are still distinctly visible. How long it has lain there it is impossible to guess, but it seems curious that, if it belongs to the pre-Roman period, the Romans should have used the quarry and yet left it in its place.

It was with the greatest difficulty that I could tear myself away from Baalbec, although the weather was now so hot it was impossible to stay out in the middle of the day. I therefore settled to take my journey by night to Arayeh, in the Lebanon, where I was invited to stay with a friend. We started about four o'clock in the afternoon, and rode straight down the plain of the B'kaa to Storer, where I had a comfortable dinner at the little Greek inn on the coach-road. It was midnight before we again got on our way.

We had mounted for about two miles, when we saw the Damascus coach following us on the road below. It at once became our object to run a race with it to Arayeh. My horses, the best that I could procure at that season in Damascus, were perfectly incapable of trotting, for they were only "kadishes," or baggage-horses. However, by continually spurring, we managed to get them into a sort of fast shuffling walk, and continued it all through the night. The coach must have been heavily laden, for it went so slowly that its lights soon disappeared from sight.

The road is as well constructed as any high road in England. It is kept up on the French system, with cantonniers every few kilomêtres. There are eleven stations for changing horses in the total length of 70 miles. Two of these, one on the hill of the Lebanon and one on the Anti-Lebanon, are much larger than the rest, for they are stopping-places

stopping-places for the large trains of luggage-waggons. We passed one of these in the twilight. It consisted, as usual, of thirteen waggons, each drawn by three mules. Every cart was numbered, and travelled in order, number 1 coming first. The last two were made of sheet-iron, and very much resembled elongated water-carts. They are for conveying silk and other valuables, and are carefully locked and sealed with lead at starting. As we passed them they were ascending rather a steep bit of road. One-half of the carts was left at the bottom, and two mules taken from those teams and added to the front half, so that each in the moving half had five mules. When they had arrived at the top, all the mules, except one to each cart, were unharnessed and taken down the hill again. In this way the train of waggons are able to get over the great hill of the Lebanon, where the road rises to an altitude of 6,000 feet above the sea. The progress is so slow, that these people take three days on their journey, going for twelve hours each day, or thirty-six hours for 70 miles.

We had descended some hundred feet on the Beyrout side of the Lebanon when the sun rose, and at that moment we met the Beyrout coach coming up the hill and going to Damascus. It was just where some new buildings were being constructed for storing the snow extensively used during the summer in Beyrout. A good many people were, therefore, about. The passing of the coach is always a more or less exciting scene when there is any one to see it on this generally lonely road. The driver, an Arab, always gets very excited, crying to his six horses and cracking his whip, while the travellers inside stick their heads out of

 window

window to exchange greetings with the bystanders. The drivers all talk French, and this one shouted out a hearty "Bon jour" to us as we passed.

By six o'clock I arrived at the beautiful little house of my friend at Arayeh. The village we passed near just before was Arlieh, the birthplace of my trusty servant. As we came to its private road, branching from the main road, the old Druse, who always lives at a cottage near the fork, came out to see us. He was an old friend of my servant's family, and when they met the two embraced and kissed each other on both cheeks. After a short conversation, in which my servant told the old Druse what he wished to be said to his father, we rode on. The old man went to a slight knoll a short distance off, overlooking the valley that divided Arlieh from ourselves, and gave a prolonged halloo. This was presently answered by another from the village, a mile off. The conversation then ensued in Arabic, and seemed perfectly satisfactory to both. We had barely arrived at Arayeh before we heard the galloping of a horse behind us, and saw my servant Milhem's father dressed in his full uniform as head zaptieh of the village, and mounted upon his bay Arab.

I found no one stirring in the house at Arayeh, and knowing that it would take some time to prepare food for any one as hungry as I was, I accepted Milhem's invitation to breakfast with him at Arlieh. We therefore turned round, and after about three-quarters of an hour's riding arrived at his cottage door.

Rathwân—such was the name of my host—is quite an important man in his village, and though his stipend as a zaptihe

zaptieh is very small, his office gives him great advantages, and in minor cases he appoints himself judge, magistrate, and police officer, all in one. Most people are afraid to go contrary to his dictates, which, to do him justice, are generally tolerably wise. He owns a small property that has a little spring of water upon it. He had lately built a house to let during the summer season, for Arlieh is one of the favourite villages where the Beyroutines live during the hot weather. Its general level is about 3,000 feet above the sea, and though very hot in the daytime the air is always cool at night. One of its greatest advantages is that it can be easily reached by a carriage, the villagers having constructed a good carriage road at their own expense, branching off the Damascus coach road. The village is in the Druse district. The inhabitants are so honest that none of the visitors ever take the trouble to close their windows or lock their front door. The district is well guarded by night police, and no robbers from outside are likely to enter without being caught.

As we entered the village my servant received salutations from all hands, and people shouted to their neighbours to give the news, for he was the first one of them who had ever travelled so far. By the time we had got to the cottage we had quite a crowd after us. Excitement was further kept up by my servant firing off all the six chambers of his revolver as he dismounted. I went into the house and watched the proceedings through a window whilst my breakfast was getting ready.

The number of visitors increased every minute. Men brought their guns, which they fired off at intervals. The

women brought their voices, which they used in giving the scream of joy. This consists of a prolonged piercing cry suddenly ending in a few words, repeated with great rapidity, telling the people the occasion of rejoicing. Each woman as she came took her turn at the screaming, and after every three calls all the women present put their fingers in their mouths and made a bubbling noise. This I had before known as the custom at all marriages, but had never before come across an occasion sufficiently great for its use. My poor servant meanwhile had to undergo a perfect ordeal of kissing, both from the men and his numerous female relations, for, being only twenty years old, they considered him a boy. The Druse women all wear a black veil out of doors, and conceal the whole face with the exception of one eye. They also wear it indoors before strangers, but I was now considered so much one of the family that many of them came in with their veils open. The greater number of the girls in this village are good looking, though they become extremely ugly in old age. If one of them caught me looking straight at her she would immediately re-cover her face, though when pretty she coquetted sufficiently to allow me to see a good deal, and seemed to think it very good fun. My breakfast was soon over; it was served in a room apart to do me due honour, and quite in the European style. In order not to interfere with their rejoicing I left early, and as I trotted off I heard the screams dying away in the distance behind me.

CHAP. XI.

Beyrout and Home.

VERY picturesquely situated on the Damascus road is the Christian village of Arayeh, and there is from thence a good view of Beyrout, lying below on a slight spur of land. As in all the villages on the Lebanon, stone is used for both houses and cottages. Each has an arcade in front, built with pointed arches. The inhabitants are so clever at constructing the arches that they are often built without either mortar or centering, yet they stand for ages. Large blocks of stone are frequently used, the tops of windows and doors being of one piece. No machinery is employed to raise them, but there are strong men who have trained themselves to carry weights, and these do the work. It often happens that the carrying of one piece of stone from the ground up to its resting-place, constitutes a whole day's work. For the man is so exhausted from the tremendous exertion, lasting only a few minutes, that he has to spend the rest of the day in repose to enable him to work the next day. In this manner pieces of a quarter of a ton are used in building quite small cottages.

In the better class of houses the rooms all open from a covered square hall, known as the court, which in these summer

summer residences is usually open, and used as dining and sitting-room.

The custom has its inconveniences, as the birds and insects too frequently assist at the meals. Except to the houses of Europeans there are no flower gardens. The land is cultivated in terraces, for the slopes on the Lebanon are generally very steep. On a small number of the terraces to each village the necessary vegetables are raised; all the rest are planted with mulberry trees. In the early spring this gives a delightfully green appearance; but in May and June the trees are stripped of their leaves for the silk-worms, which form the main source of profit to the villagers.

The journey from Arayeh to Beyrout is very easy, as there is an excellent road all the way. For about two miles on the outside of the town it is surrounded by gardens, thickly studded with cottages. Towards the south there are large groves of fir-trees, through which the old mule-path runs. This is much the pleasantest way of entering the town, owing to the cool shade of the trees. The ground is of fine soft red sand, rather heavy for the animals. It is to arrest this sand that fir-trees have been planted to the south of the town. On the coast there are large hills of it, supposed to have been carried by wind and sea from Egypt. The prevalent south-west winds blow the sands on the town in such volumes that they have threatened to overwhelm it. About eighty years ago a belt of fir-trees was planted with the hope of stopping the forward movement of the sand, and this was so far successful that large groves have been planted since. The greater part of the town is now happily safe. Outside the plantations houses half-buried can

can still be seen, and there are many completely under the sand. It is near this part that there was not room to plant the trees without encroaching on valuable property partly covered with houses. The sand is, therefore, still advancing in that quarter, and appears like a wall of 20 to 30 feet high, that extends a few feet further every year. As yet the trees and shrubs that have been planted on its face and in the gardens have not been sufficient to stop it, and unless some valuable property is sacrificed the most fashionable part of Beyrout will be buried eventually.

The roadstead at Beyrout is by no means a good one, though better than most others along the coast. It is quite unprotected from a north wind, and when this blows, as it often does, communication between ships and shore is entirely suspended, and steamers make for the open sea for safety. The vessels have to lie at least a mile away from the landing-place even in calm weather, and there is generally a very unpleasant movement in embarking and disembarking.

The custom house is far too small, and the scramble is very great both in arriving and departing. Backsheesh will often, but not always, carry the visitor through, and it is better to allow its administration to be performed by a native, as it generally fails if too openly done.

Close by the custom-house stand the remains of an old castle. Part of it is on the mainland and part on a small projecting rock. A high tower formerly stood on the latter, but it has lately been demolished to make room for the coast-guard. In many parts of the town shafts and capitals of Roman classic columns are lying about on the surface. Several

Several statues have been discovered, and one lies headless and prone in one of the busiest thoroughfares. The old town of Beyrout is full of narrow streets that often resemble tunnels as they pass continually under houses. The old walls are still tolerably intact, and the gateways are very good examples of mediæval fortification. Some of the khans are extensive and have highly ornamental doorways.

Beyrout has the great advantage of being built entirely of stone, and mediæval remains abound in out-of-the-way corners. In this it compares favourably with Damascus, where, on account of the material being mud, the private houses soon fall into decay. The European quarter is outside the walls, and pleasantly situated upon high ground. The roads are broad and good, so that carriages can be used. Ten years ago there was scarcely such a thing as the latter, but now they are numerous, and can be hired like cabs off the ranks. Midhat Pacha has been very active in making roads in the country round about, and there are some very pleasant drives in the neighbourhood. The natives frequently avail themselves of these advantages; and as among the Mahometan population only the males go out at all, the roads are full of carriages with men only inside them. Occasionally one does see native ladies, but they are always Christians.

There is a large number of colleges and schools in Beyrout, and the rich families throughout Syria, and even in Cyprus, send their children to this town to be educated. There are two large Roman Catholic seminaries, besides a Protestant German Sisterhood owning a large ladies' college,

college, and a host of missionary schools belonging to every sect. Foremost among these is the American college, that stands a conspicuous object on the hill near the lighthouse. In it can be obtained an education almost equal to the highest in Europe. Besides all the usual branches of learning there is a large medical school attached, but in a separate building, and here diplomas are granted. Among the native doctors, education there ranks higher than at any other place, and the whole of Syria is gradually being supplied with efficient medical men, replacing the old apothecaries and herbalists that formerly reigned supreme. Modern languages form an important part of the educational course, and above all things Arabic is most thoroughly taught. All the professors, and in fact all the American missionaries, are obliged to know it well, for if they cannot pass a good examination in it after two years they are sent back to their own country.

The hotels are better in Beyrout than in any of the other Syrian towns, Jerusalem not excepted. There is a curious lack of places of entertainment, as these have been discountenanced by the missionaries. There are a few small *cafés chantants*, but so bad they are not even amusing in their badness. Everything can be found at Beyrout that can be bought at Damascus, and the visitor may generally do much better by buying what he wants here. There are no gas-works yet in the town, so large quantities of petroleum are consumed, and the authorities have wisely set apart isolated buildings for its reception, far away from the usual wharf. One of these, the latest constructed, stands right in the sea, and has an archway for boats to enter into the dock

dock within, so that the petroleum has not even to be carried across a wharf to the stores.

It was on the 21st of June, 1880, that I left Beyrout in the Russian s.s. *Corniloff.* The captain, like most others on this line, spoke English, and before we had been ten minutes in conversation we found we had met fifteen years before. As a passenger we had the Russian agent who had been so polite to me at Alexandretta, so that the voyage was very pleasant. The Russian line of steamers, though the slowest, are in all other respects the most comfortable. They are never crowded, the food is always good, and the berths consist of iron bedsteads, two only of which are placed in each roomy cabin. It is also by far the cheapest of all the lines.

The sea was as calm as any bad sailor could desire, and remained so the whole night. We arrived at Jaffa two hours after sunrise, and before we had been anchored there two hours a swell came on that made the vessel heave uncomfortably the whole day; for though we were timed to start at mid-day, we did not leave till sunset.

The next morning found us at Port Said, and we entered just in time to see the *Messageries* steamer leaving for Marseilles. On inquiring, I found that no less than six steamers were going to England on the following day, and that scarcely a day ever passes without an Indian liner passing through in one direction or another. For quitting the Holy Land, Port Said is, therefore, the best place whence to obtain a passage for the sea voyage home to England. The town is not the dangerous place now that it once was. The

The police keep excellent order, and it is perfectly safe at all times. The sea to the north-east is retiring perceptibly, and there is already a belt of sand three-quarters of a mile wide between its present shore and the houses that once stood on its edge.

There are two towns, the European and the Arab, distant from each other about a mile. A good road connects them, raised above the shifting sand. Both towns are completely modern, having been built entirely since the formation of the Suez Canal. Nearly all the buildings are of wood and quite unpicturesque, yet the native town is so thoroughly Arabic that to those who have not been in Egypt or among the Arabs it is well worth a visit.

On the 24th of June I took a passage in the *Cuzco*, of the Orient line, a large vessel of 4,000 tons. We had a most uneventful voyage home, stopping only at Naples. As we left the bay at sunset we were fortunate in seeing flame and smoke suddenly issue from the crater of Vesuvius. We got to Plymouth on the 8th, and finally to London on the 9th July, 1880.

INDEX.